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ISSUE 51 ■ DECEMBER 1990 ■ £1.95

1990's Greatest Hits

Inside: the best PCW releases of the year on parade

CHRISTMAS BONANZA

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OPENING MENU

FEATURES

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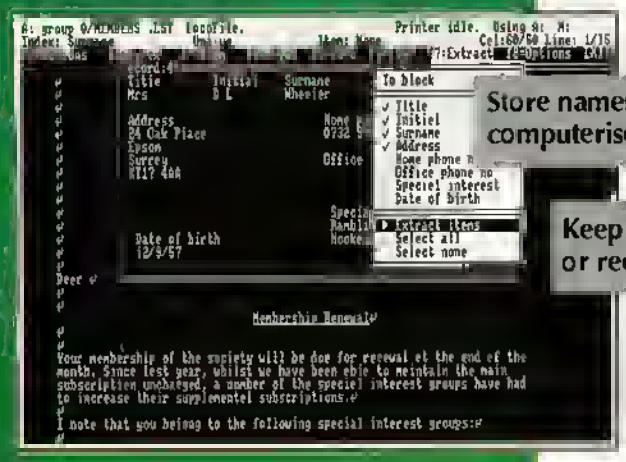

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Individually LocoScript 2 costs £29.95 and LocoFile costs £34.95

1990 has been an extremely fertile period for the PCW. The proliferation of top quality software and hardware releases for the machine is, we feel, cause enough for a celebration. As the year draws to a close, we're taking the opportuntiy to sit back and toast the pick of the bunch with you.

Despite this year's spell of productivity, the industry still can't afford to sit back on its laurels.

One of the key areas for development will be accessibility - to all areas of PCW know-how. Why shouldn't everyone who owns a PCW be able to get the best out of their machine?

The two controlling factors are resources - and information. This month we take a look at both. Our review of the new, budget 24-pin printer from Citizen shows you how top-quality output can be yours - without having to burn too deep a hole in your pocket.

We're also taking a look at the nation's PCW training organisations - one sure way to improve your PCW performance without ever reaching the stage where you want to tear your hair out. And, the second in our series on Micro Design, shows you how you can add that professional touch to your business stationery. A little PCW knowledge, it seems, is not necessarily a dangerous thing.

Finally, Christmas would not be Christmas without a gift from 8000 Plus. We've some superb prizes to give away in our Lucky Dip competition; a handscanner, an SCA RAMpac, copies of Foreword and MusicPad - don't miss your chance to get a share of the winnings.

Merry Christmas from us all - here's to the coming year.

FLIPPER 3 ON ITS WAY

Software Imperative prepare to re-vamp popular PCW utility

Software Imperative are currently hard at work on an upgraded version of Flipper 2+, the utility which allows you to effectively split your PCW in half, by working in two environments at the same time.

Flipper 3 will differ from its predecessors in, appropriately enough, three crucial areas. Andy Wilton, the man behind previous Flippers and the highly successful text pre-processor Foreword, explains. "The first difference is that Flipper 3 will be completely self-booting. There will no longer be any need to load CP/M before you can run the program," he told us.

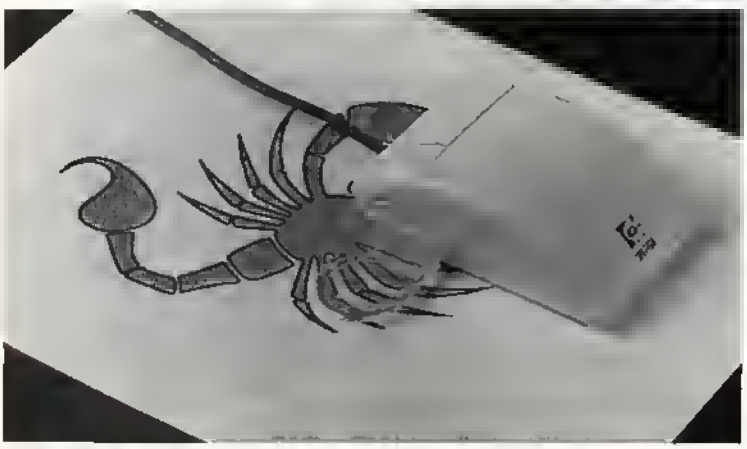
The new program will also allow the user to swap between up to eight environments on the PCW, instead of just two. Said Mr Wilton, "With the availability of extra memory for the machine, in the form of Rampacs and hard drives, there is now a place for a program which can flip between the many types of environment available, without the nuisance of having to stop and re-boot each time."

The third main difference will be that the program will be entirely menu-driven. "When I was working on Foreword," Wilton explained, "I realised that that it was actually more user friendly than Flipper. What I have learned from the development of Foreword, I have reflowed into Flipper, and the result is a very neat, powerful but easy to use program."

Software Imperative hope that Flipper 3 will be ready for release in January of 1991. A price for the new program has not yet been finalised, but owners of previous versions will be able to upgrade to Flipper 3 for a fraction of the cost of the new program.

8000 Plus will be reviewing Flipper 3 in the very near future. Software Imperative can be contacted on (0225) 425315 – although no details on Flipper 3 will be available as yet to callers.

DOING THE MOUSEWORK



'Tracey' brings greater accuracy to the reproduction of graphic images on the PCW. Attached to the side of a mouse, you simply use the clear lens to trace around the edge of a picture or an illustration. Then import the outline into any DTP package. Tracey costs £7.95

Devon-based Sidewise Ltd have come up with a revolutionary new graphics tool to enhance the productivity of all computers fitted with mice. Tracey, as she is known, allows all kinds of illustrations and artwork to be input directly into any PCW graphics package.

Tracey is actually an acrylic moulding which attaches to either side of a mouse. The idea is to 'trace' the outline of an image using the clear lens as your guide. You can then import and manipulate the outline which you produce using any drawing or DTP program.

Sidewise director Simon Williams believes that Tracey "opens up new areas of computer graphic reproduction," and that she constitutes a "low-cost digitising tool", which is "a breakthrough in graphic computing".

Images which previously would have to be scanned can now be reproduced in freehand - a much cheaper alternative. Tracey is compatible with both the AMX and Kempston mice - the two most popular vermin for DTP on the PCW.

The lens costs £7.95, and is available through most major dealers, or direct from SideWise Ltd at PO Box 4, Totnes, Devon TQ9 7EN.

PCW HELPLINE

West Country PCW-er Chris Bryant is offering knowledge and experience of the machine to new and prospective users – over the telephone.

If you have just acquired your PCW and you are still in the dark as to which software will be the best for you, why not give him a call. Chris cannot guarantee to answer all your queries, but, he tells us, he is, "willing to have a go at helping anyone," if he can.

The service is free and, it must be stressed, it is available to new users only. Any sticky technical enquiries should still be directed, by letter please, to us here at 8000 Plus.

Chris Bryant awaits your call on (0297) 20456. Please exercise a little discretion when calling Mr Bryant. Although your software dilemmas and PCW worries might have you up at three in the morning, the helpline will be trying to get some well-earned rest.

FOLLOW THAT, CAB

Cavalier Software, the vertical software experts, are releasing a new program specifically for the needs of PCW-owning taxi drivers. Called, suitably enough, Taxi, the program is aimed at making the administration and day to day running of a taxi firm less of a headache.

8000 Plus will be hailing Taxi for review in our January issue.

NEWS

by Sophie Lankenau

Christmas gifts

If you turn to page 10 of this month's issue, you'll see a round-up of the best PCW releases of 1990.

Our thanks go to Parasol, Abbey Churchyard, Bath, whose festive bits and pieces are the perfect match for the top quality products on parade.

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The famous game which originated on main frame computers, with save and re-load, Plus BESTIARY, "A well-produced, novel adventure" - Bill Brock Adventurer's Guide.

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Four entertaining quiz games from Nemesis: The Trial of Arnold Blackwood, Arnold Goes To Somewhere Else, The Wise And Feel Of Arnold Blackwood, Brawn Free. "A good challenge lots of hints and tips and a good range of responses" - 8000 PLUS.

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SHARE AND SHARE ALIKE

PD and shareware specialists Advanced Marketing Systems are on the lookout for quality PD programs to expand their current selection.

The company operates on a strictly non-profit making basis, so they will not be able to pay you for any programs submitted. However, any work of a particularly good standard will be distributed as shareware, and the relevant registration fees will be arranged by AMS.

Programs will be distributed at the minimum cost possible. The only charge to the end user will be the price of a three inch disc and a nominal charge to cover publicity and marketing.

The reason behind the move is simple. AMS are hoping to build up an extensive PD library, offering the best of software for a minimal outlay. They hope that people will be encouraged to submit their own programs once they see the quality of the work submitted by others.

AMS will also be offering a backup service for users, to help them with any difficulties which they may encounter in operation of the software – not just the programs AMS are offering but for "nearly every program for the PCW".

"Technical help never seems to be forthcoming from high street dealers. Some even charge for their time, even if its only a minor question. We are hoping to provide an on-line help system early next year, where people can leave their queries, and we can then answer them," explained AMS's Geoff Emmerson.

If you have written any programs which you think might be of interest to the AMS PD Library, send them in, complete with a brief description of what they do and a note confirming that the work is original and hitherto unpublished.

Send your discs, mini-documentation and declaration of originality to Geoff Emmerson at Advanced Marketing Systems, 9 Barber Square, Jeremy Lane, Heckmondwike, West Yorkshire, WF19 9QQ.

MARGINAL FEAT

Margin Maker's upgraded version of their three and a half year old cut sheet paper locater and aligner. The new, improved MM3i comes with a modified feed angle and better printer pitch scales - for only £14.95.

Margin Maker, manufacturers of the MM3 cut-sheet locater and aligner for the PCW 8256 and 8512 printers, have released an upgraded version of the product called MM3i.

The original has been in circulation now for over three years, and, say its manufacturers, is "one of those sensible good value products that completely solve an annoying problem and make using the PCW even more convenient".

The new improved version comes complete with a modified feed angle and better printer pitch scales. It sounds like the perfect way to ensure neat and accurate printing at a cost of only £14.95, including VAT and postage. Margin Maker can be contacted on (0784) 452677.

Modest though the price is, this month you have the chance to get your hands an MM3i for absolutely no charge – other than the cost of a postage stamp. We've got 20 Margin Makers to give away as part of our bumper Lucky Dip Christmas competition. Turn to the back page for more details.

PICTURE THIS...

Hampshire DTP-ers Medway DTP have been appointed sole distributors of a fonts and clip art package called Get-Set Typeset - reviewed in our February 1989 issue of 8000 Plus.

Get-Set Typeset is designed to run with Stop Press. It even contains a utility to convert ASCII text saved from a number of word processors (not just LocoScript 1 and 2) into a form suitable for Stop Press to take.

The font selection includes typefaces for headlines and body text; the clip art itself covers transport, musical notation, and heraldry, among other things.

The package comes in three discs, and costs a mere £24.95. Phone Medway DTP on (0703) 442591 for more details.

THE PERSONAL TOUCH

The recent release of The Systems Personaliser could help make the PCW a more efficient and approachable machine.

The new program, developed by SP Software, is designed to help you create your own menu system. This means that simple, everyday commands (such as you would use if you wanted a directory of disc contents, a disc formatted, or a file saved), can be entered at the touch of a button, without you having to type them out in full.

The manufacturers claim that The Systems Personaliser is, 'designed to make your PCW faster and easier to use". The user selects the options which he or she would like to be simplified, and the program then goes on to create the ready-to-use menu.

Your own programs, or indeed any commercial software, can be included in the list. The most popular menu options, however, are likely to be those mainstays of the PCW existence - the CP/M commands. The directory command, for example, is used countless times every day and is just one area where the benefits of fingertip implementation of these popular commands needs no further explanation.

The Systems Personaliser is available from S.P. Software, at 29 Beresford Drive, Boldmere, Sutton Coldfield, B73 5QZ. The price of the program, complete with instructions, is £15.00.

```
M   THE  PERSONALISED  SYSTEM   M
A                                A
I          Format disc .........f2   I
           Main Menu ...........f4
N          Save.sub ............f5   N
           Pip .................f6
           Rename ..............f8
           Show ................RELAY
M          Directory............LINE   M
           Load batch files ....FIND
E          Text Editor .........EOL   E
     REMOVE MENU FUNCTION KEYS ....o (letter)
N                                N
           Copyright 16/3/90  M Jones
U                                U
```

SP Software's Systems Personaliser allows the user to introduce short-cuts in the implementation of everday commends. You choose the commends; the program does the rest.

Porky idea

News has reached us from the States of a fabulous ribbon re-inking device, which, say the makers, resembles "a black plastic pork chop on legs".

The Macinker is an automatic device which re-inks entire ribbons in less than nine minutes. You, meanwhile, don't have to do a thing. Except, perhaps, get cracking on the apple sauce?

Starry starry night

Discovery Software have brought out an upgraded version of their heavenly software package, Startrack.

Startrack+ allows you to find and identify all 88 constellations, see all the planets and even reset the earth's clock to any time, day or year from 1000AD to the year 2999.

The manufacturers claim that the program will be of interest to both the astronomy expert and the novice. It is also of great educational interest to school-aged children.

8000 Plus will be beaming up Startrack+ for review in the January issue of the magazine.

TV stardom

After last month's series of sightings of the PCW in various unlikely publications, we can now reveal that the machine has branched out into television.

The children's programme *Going Live*, which goes out at 9.15 every Saturday morning, featured a children's poet by the name of Brian Patten (whose poetry, incidentally, was excellent). Brian was interviewed in his home where he was hard at work on his latest poem.

Hard at work, that is, with the help of his PCW 9512. It must be at least part of his success!

Meanwhile, if you ever tune in to Esther Ranzten's new Sunday afternoon show, Hearts of Gold, you may have seen the short film on a gentleman who has overcome cerebral palsy to teach handicapped children how to throw the javelin.

So impressed were Amstrad with the gentleman's achievements, that they gave him a PCW 9512 to help him with the administration of his work.

If you spot the PCW on your television screen, write and let us know!

Simple mistake

Last month's Good Software Guide included an entry for Cornix Software's Simple Accounts II package. The price for the software is actually £69.95, and not £99.95 as published.

LINDEX LINK-UP

Since the release of LocoScript PC, many software manufacturers are bringing out PC versions of existing products, to cater for the large crossover in PC/PCW users.

The latest company to do so are Festival Software Services, producers of the file indexer programs Lindex and Super Lindex.

The program is near to completion, but Festival would like to invite "a few volunteers" to experiment with the software before it goes on general release. So, if you are a PCW and PC user and feel that you could give Lindex PC (as we assume it will be called) a fair and constructive evaluation, get in touch with Festival as soon as possible. In return for your work, the company will give you a free copy of the final version.

Festival Software Services use the proceeds from product sales to contribute to the repairs and maintenance of rural and inner city churches. If you are interested in Lindex (£7.00) or Super Lindex PCW (£14.95), contact the company at 470 Leeds Road, Thackley, Bradford BD10 9AA, or telephone them on (0274) 613300.

FLEET STREET RE-LOCATED

If you want to get your hands on Fleet Street Editor Plus, the DTP package from Mirrorsoft, then that company are no longer the people to approach. Mirrorsoft have handed distribution of the package over to The Software Toolworks (or Toolworks for short, thankfully).

During the changeover period, technical support staff from Mirrorsoft will work alongside the new distribution team to ensure that everyone is familiar with the workings of the package.

For a quick summary of Fleet Street Editor Plus's main features, check out The Good Software Guide on page 79 of the February 1990 issue of 8000 Plus. The product was removed from the guide in subsequent issues due to Mirrorsoft's decision to cease handling distribution of the package.

Fleet Street Editor Plus can now be obtained from Toolworks on (044) 486720. At the time of going to press, it retains its original price of £49.95.

KEEP IT CLEAN

If you've ever been frustrated by the seeming reluctance of your local dealer to tell you about sources of maintenance for your PCW, help could now be at hand.

NBA Data Services of Shoscombe, near Bath, are to publish a survey in December of the UK's independent maintenance companies for the microcomputer industry. It will include details of over 50 major maintenance companies, their range of services and the type of equipment which they offer support for.

More details from Nigel Booker on (0761) 37043.

CLUB NEWS

THE BLIZZARD FROM OZ

It's good to see that the PCW has as many fans abroad as it does in this country. Along with a deluge of letters this month in the Club News postbag from user groups in the UK has come a deluge-ette of the same from Down Under.

Fred Fleming from Masferton, New Zealand, has written to tell us about Amswell, the Wellington (NZ) Amstrad User's Group. The club currently has about 80 members, and is on the look out for more.

Of course, the feasibilty of UK members attending Amswell meetings regularly is certain to be called into question but Mr Fleming is keen to welcome overseas members to the club on a purely postal basis. The club produces a newsletter every month, entitled Amswell, which contains details of the latest releases for the PCW.

This is one of the reasons why Mr Fleming is on the lookout for UK members to the club. It seems that information about the machine is very slow to reach New Zealand's shores, so having regular input from UK PCW users will ensure that everyone is kept up to date with industry and product news.

If you would like to make contact with Amswell, write to Mr Fleming at 23 Waltons Avenue, Masterton, New Zealand.

Meanwhile, in Australia, the Amstrad PCW Australia Group (APAG?) is alive and meeting on a semi-regular basis in Smithfield, New South Wales.

Secretary David York tells us that the club has many members, from all over the country, who communicate by letter with the club's headquarters. Because its members are separated by huge distances, APAG'S monthly meetings are not always well attended. However, the panel of experts within the club are happy to answer questions on specific areas of PCW-ing by mail.

Like Amswell in New Zealand, APAG are keen to welcome overseas members. A regular newsletter, containing news, advice and features is included in the membership fee of A$25 per year - that's about £10 to us poms. It doesn't, unfortunately, cover travelling expenses to and from the regular club meetings in Burwood, New South Wales.

For more details, contact David York at the Amstrad PCW Australia Group, PO Box 478, Smithfield, New South Wales 2164, Australia. And, from 8000 Plus to our friends at APAG and Amswell, thanks for getting in touch, and we look forward to hearing more about your activities in the future.

HASTING TIME

Joe Unwin has written to Club News with word of a recently formed user group near Hastings in Sussex. The club is currently recruiting new members and anyone living within reasonable distance of St Leonards-on-Sea should get in touch with Mr Unwin.

The club plans to set up regular monthly meetings and establish a PD library and an advice clinic. The provisional annual subscription will be a very reasonable £9.95 – a price which does seem to be the average for new clubs throughout the country.

For further information, contact Mr Unwin at 7 Fulford Close, St Leonards-on-Sea, East Sussex TN38 0PN, telephone 0424 715108.

FOLLOW MY LEEDER

If you live in Leeds and know of a PCW club in the area, Club News would like to hear about it. We've received several enquiries about a club in that area, and are keen to put readers in touch with anyone in the know.

Yorkshire seems to be fertile ground for PCW Clubs; not only is there the Ground Floor User Group at Hebden Bridge, but also a new organisation in the city of York itself. The York Amstrad Computer Club meets every Tuesday at 8pm in the Enterprise Social Club, 17 Nunnery Lane, York. Entrance costs just 70p a time, in return for which you can enjoy an evening of demonstrations, information, literature and advice. Sounds like a bargain.

Details and more information can be obtained from any of the following: Simon Williams (0904 640164), Chris Guy (0904 410490) or Neil Guppy (0904 622879).

STARTING A CLUB

If you want to start a PCW Club in your area why not write and tell us? We'll be happy to let others know where you are and how to contact you. Another good way to get the ball rolling is to put up a notice in your local newsagent's or library, announcing your interest in forming a club. You might well be surprised at the number of PCW owning people in your area who are keen to get together to swap ideas and advice. So, don't just sit there, do it! The results, we assure you, will be worthwhile.

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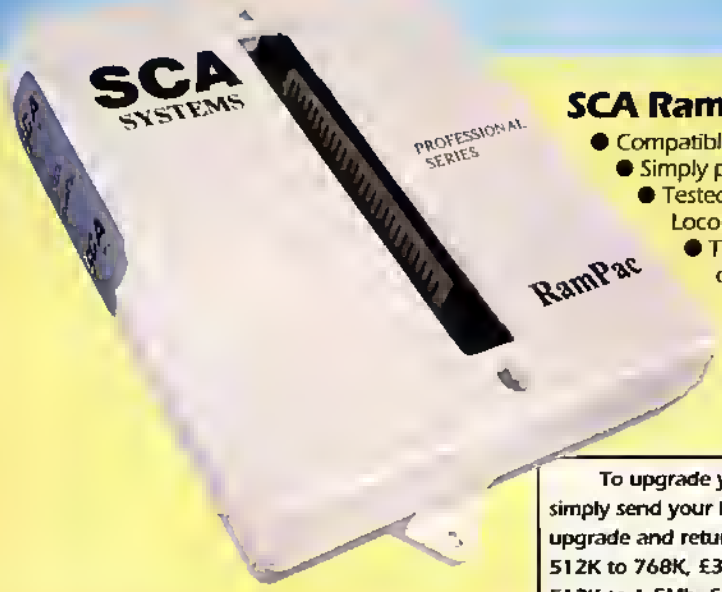

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- Simply plug into the expansion port.
- Tested Locoscript compatible by Locomotive Software.
- Through-connector allows continued use of other peripherals.
- Three versions available- 512K, 768K and 1.5Mb.
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To upgrade your existing SCA Rampac simply send your Rampac to us and we will upgrade and return it within 48 hours
512K to 768K, £30.39 + VAT = £34.95 post free
512K to 1.5Mb, £100 + VAT = £115 post free
768K to 1.5Mb, £75 + VAT = £86.25 post free

512K
- Adds 512K of RAM. Instantly!
- Only £99.00 + VAT. Total £113.85 – postage free.

768K
- Will upgrade your PCW 8256 to a full 1Mb.
- Only £119 + VAT. Total £136.85 – postage free.

1.5Mb
- Three times the memory of basic Rampac for only twice the price!
- Allows Locoscript users to use the maximum 2Mb memory on 8512/9512 machines.
- Flipper 2 recommended for CP/M users.
- Only £199.00 + VAT. Total £228.85 – postage free.

If you use Locoscript you should have a Rampac– but don't just take our word for it, see what the magazines say–

> The Rampac will enhance any PCW and I have no hesitation in endorsing its usefulness.
> *Amstrad PCW July 1990*

> It's very good value and provides the easiest way of upgrading your memory.
> *8000 Plus February 1990*

> You can be sure that the Rampac will work with all your Locoscript 2 programs.
> *Locomotive Software*

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Access
VISA

The Best of 1990!

The last twelve months have seen a glut of original and innovative releases appearing on the PCW market, each one vying with the others for the attention of the machine. We now look back on some of the best ...

Nobody could argue that 1990 hasn't been good to the PCW. With a long, unbroken string of what can only be described, in some cases, as highly revolutionary soft- and hardware releases emerging little by little onto the scene, it really hasn't done too badly at all.

September, of course, saw the climax with the long-awaited release of Creative Technology's ProSCAN handscanner. We all looked on with bated breath. Not only did this product consolidate the company's position of authority on the PCW market following their September '89 release of Micro Design, it catapulted the humble PCW into the limelight as a DTP force to be, at long last, truly reckoned with. In the same month, Software Imperative's Foreword made its debut appearance. It was the word pre-processor which was aiming to help writers of every persuasion get even more out of their faithful desktop companion. February was a good month too, with both PCW SuperDOS and the SCA RamPac making their respective splashes in *8000 Plus*. And these were only the tip of the iceberg.

Now is the time you might be thinking about rewarding your PCW for all the hard work – not to mention, cursing – you've put it through over the past twelve months. Why not have a leisurely browse through our very own run-down of the best releases of 1990? We defy you not to spot a Krimble pressie or two – either for your own machine or for some other PCW addict you know. Watch out for the issue and page numbers of the actual review; you can flick through your back issues for the full story. Have fun.

1 ProSCAN Handscanner

£179 ● Creative Technology
0889 567160
(Issue 48 and Issue 50, page 10)

This was pretty major stuff; a handscanning device which, with the help of dedicated ProSCAN interface and software, allows you to convey images – any kind, from photographs and illustrations to line-drawings, irrespective of whether they are colour or black and white – onto the screen of your PCW. They can then be stored as graphic images for later use in the Micro Design DTP package.

The handscanner is simplicity itself to use; once you have the software loaded, all you have to do is position the scan head at the top of the picture in question (it can be any size) and slowly move the scanner, in a downwards direction, over it. There are three rollers underneath the head which permit a smooth easy passage across the picture surface. If the picture is bigger than the scan head (ie, wider than four inches), simply scan in the image column by column.

You can control the size of each scan and its dither and stipple (grey tones and shading, to you and me) with the help of the 'dots per inch' button and the dither settings on each side of the scanner. Although ProSCAN has its own interface, this comes with a through connector so that you can easily use the package with either of the AMX or Kempston mice, each of which requires its own interface.

Creative's Handscanner was an out and out success, essential for any PCW-user who takes desktop publishing seriously. To see it in action, turn to page 10 of last month's issue.

Drawbacks: None we could seriously entertain for very long!

2 HardPak

£499 (20 Meg) £599 (40 Meg)
Cirtech ● 0835 23898
(Issue 50, page 46)

This release constituted another major breakthrough for the serious PCW-user: a hard disc (20 or 40 Mb, no less) that comes in at roughly the same size as a slightly outsize pack of cigarettes (and weighing about that, too) which, get this, literally clips onto the expansion card at the back of the PCW in less than a second. Gone, at long last, are the days of floodlit, back-end micro-surgery which used, in days of yore, to signal the gorey attachment of any hard disc to the PCW.

HardPak can run LocoScript 2 or CP/M with the same degree of ease. The hardware can, however, only handle the latest version of LocoScript 2 – version 2.28; the good news is that, as a result of a special Cirtech-Locomotive agreement, the necessary software to upgrade the program to version 2.28 has actually been included on the disc.

HardPak's immediate advantages become evident when conducting speed trials. A 2k Protext file is saved on the HardPak in under two seconds; on a floppy, seven seconds. Similarly, HardPak loads a 20k Protext file in as little as four seconds as opposed to 11 from a floppy.

Drawbacks: Because, like an interface, HardPak slots onto the PCW's expansion card and there are no piggy-backing facilities, you can't use the hard disc for any mouse-driven, graphics or DTP work. It's a great pity, because that's precisely when you're likely to most need a product of this kind.

3 RamPac Add-On

£113.85 incl. VAT (512k)
SCA Systems ● 0903 700288
(Issue 41, page 17)

The easiest way – to date – of upgrading your PCW's memory. Another interface-lookalike add-on containing – at the time of the RamPac's release way back in February – 512k's worth of memory chips. SCA have now gone on to expand their RamPac range which now includes 768k and 1.5 Mb add-ons.

Until the RamPac made its appearance, memory upgrades had always been singularly messy operations involving the removal of the back of the machine and soldering into place the requisite chips. It was certainly not a task for the faint-hearted. You can still do it that way if you prefer – either yourself or paying someone to do it for you. It will be cheaper. (Silicon City do a DIY Plug in and Go 8256 256k memory upgrade kit for a total of £24.95 incl. VAT).

But the SCA RamPacs have ease of use on their side. Just plug them on and away you go. And they will allow piggy-backing – either of additional RamPacs or other peripherals.
Cost of an upgrade: 512k to 768k = £34.95 incl.
512k to 1.5 Meg = £115 incl.
768k to 1.5 Meg = £86.25 incl.
Drawbacks: There is a cheaper, manual alternative.

4 3.5 Inch Disc Drive

£79.95 ● Compact Micros
0274 640589
(Issue 41, page 17)

In February, Compact Micros' endeavours to bring the PCW, kicking and screaming, into line with industry standard disc drive sizes resulted in the arrival of the new 3.5 inch disc drive.

It meant that the PCW owner was going to be better off in a number of ways: firstly, 3.5 inch discs are much cheaper than 3 inch discs and considerably easier to come by, and, secondly, the addition of a 3.5 inch disc drive to the PCW would facilitate the easy exchange of disc-bound information between it and the 3.5 inch variety of PC computer.

The drive was, again, simplicity itself to fit (there was a fully illustrated, colour walkthrough featured in February's issue) and, once installed, slim and discreet in appearance.

Drawbacks: The usual one but one which needs pointing out to prospective buyers all the same. The drive is only compatible with single drive machines like the 8256 and 9512. Twin drive machines – like the 8512 and upgraded 9512 – have already used the available sockets.

In line with that, if you've got an 8512 and need the use of a 3.5 inch drive (to communicate with an office PC, for instance) then you will need to disable your B drive first.

Bit of a pain, but that's the way it goes, unfortunately. Consider yourselves warned.

5 Foreword

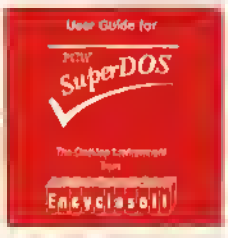
£44.95 ● Software Imperative
0225 425315
(Issue 48, page 12)

Hot on the heels of the Creative Technology handscanner, came a writers' tool called Foreword – from, incidentally, the same stable as Flipper. It, too, was very, very good.

Known affectionately in the trade as an 'ideas processor' or 'word pre-processor', Foreword provides you, the writer, with a framework on which to hang – sentence by sentence, paragraph by paragraph – your growing chef d'oeuvre. This can be a report, a newspaper or magazine article, even a book; in fact, it can be any sustained piece of work requiring a modicum of planning and a logical progression of ideas.

At the touch of a few buttons you can, in turn, 'hide' and 'show' whole sections of text and rearrange paragraphs, sentences and, if you so desire, whole chapters. The point of it is that you will never get to the stage where you can't see the wood for the trees.

Once you have your outline (and it can be as sparse or as fleshed out as you like) it can even be imported into other word processors for further polishing. A highly professional, accurate little package.
Drawbacks: It's not going to turn you overnight into a Pulitzer prize-winner and if you have a reasonably organized mind when writing you will no doubt be able to manage without it.

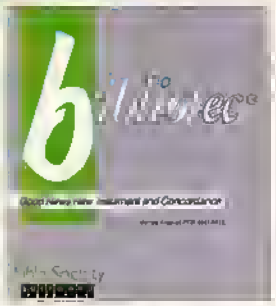


6 PCW SuperDOS

£29.95 ● Encyclasoft
0270 811890
(Issue 41, page 46)

PCW SuperDOS was first reviewed way back in the February issue of *8000 Plus*. It was – and is – one of the most unusual and, for some people, the most welcome utilities developed for use on the PCW. What SuperDOS does is emulate the ease and familiarity of the LocoScript disc management screen (DMS) for the benefit of CP/M users. Instead of finding yourself faced with the unyielding A> prompt on loading CP/M, the SuperDOS user is presented with a far more approachable working environment in the guise of a LocoScript-lookalike DMS, complete with pull-down menus and screen partitioning.

The benefits of SuperDOS quickly make themselves felt when it comes to mass file-handling, something which, we all know, LocoScript can't manage. CP/M can, of course, but again the syntax required tends not to be all that user-friendly. You can also create, edit and print out Notepads, a feature of the program which quickly becomes indispensable. PCW SuperDOS makes finding your way around CP/M a far more enjoyable process.
Drawbacks: The program needs a full 512k of memory; its performance is not quite as seamless as LocoScript's.



7 Bibliotech

£44.95 ● Bible Society Software ● 0793 513713

(Issue 45, page 24)

June saw the arrival of another long-awaited program on the PCW scene and it would be no exaggeration to say that this one had the entire contingent of PCW-owning clerics running, the length and breadth of Britain, for their chequebooks.

Bibliotech comprised the whole of the Good News Bible (1966 American transation) New Testament on 3 inch disc format. This was complete with concordance (ie, the storing and cross-referencing of keywords along with their book, chapter and verse numbers.) Bibliotech also stores these words under theme headings and with sets of related words or topics. The searches that the program allows you to carry out on the 27 books which make up the New Testament are fast, comprehensive and accurate.

It is also possible to locate those passages of the Bible which are more closely concerned with the particular word you're interested in by means of two bar charts (the Absolute and Relative charts). The first gives the total number of times a word appears throughout all of the 27 books which comprise the Testament; the second shows the relative distribution of the word throughout each of its individual chapters.

This feature enables you to home in immediately on those passages in the Bible which are more closely concerned with a particular idea.

Bibliotech established itself very quickly as a must for Bible-study students everywhere. It received full marks in the June issue of *8000 Plus*; a rare accolade indeed.

8 Music Pad

£22.94 ● Composit Software 0952 595436

(Issue 49, page 34)

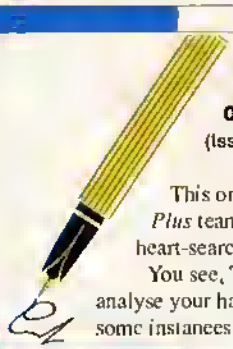
In October's issue of the magazine, we reviewed Music Pad, the new baby brother to Composit Software's November '89 release of The Composer's Pen. At less than half the price of its predecessor, Music Pad was a welcome innovation for those musicians who found all the bells and whistles of the Pen rather too sophisticated or even too daunting for their perhaps less adventurous music-composing requirements.

Although still able to print out high resolution musical scores (the quality is very impressive indeed), MusicPad is, in effect, a 'pocket-sized' Pen. For example, instead of catering for upto 99 instruments at once, Music Pad gives you just four staves, ample for the needs of say, a music teacher or smallish band of musicians.

The program's trump card lies in its ability to copy large sections of music (rather like a word processor with sentence and/or paragraph blocks) and the easy transposition of a score from one key to another.

Another very nice touch for devotees of that famous word processor is that MusicPad carries a very strong LocoScript influence. You should feel right at home there.

Drawbacks: You can't put notes of differing lengths in the same chord unless you merge two separate staves.



9 The Graphologist

£44.95 ● Intraset 0257 276800

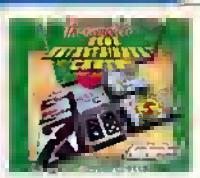
(Issue 44, page 52)

This one was an absolute cracker and afforded the *8000 Plus* team much fun and frolics – not to mention serious heart-searching – when it arrived for review in May.

You see, The Graphologist is a program which is able to analyse your handwriting and then produce a (quite telling, in some instances) personality profile in the light of it. Providing the program with the information it needs in order to do that is quite laborious and time-consuming – as you would, no doubt, expect. It carries out, in minute detail, a thorough scrutiny of the formation of each letter in your longhand scrawl before 'switching off' for a few minutes to compile a very personal, lengthy character resume – warts and all, including any latent criminal tendencies!

There are sections on work, personal relationships, stress and marriage. It's excellent fun!

Drawbacks: The input required from you is very lengthy (sometimes up to about an hour) and can become tedious. Contradictions are often evident on the profile printout.



10 The Complete Home Entertainment Centre

£19.99 ● CDS ● 0302 321134

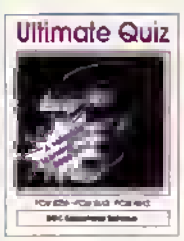
(Issue 46, page 28)

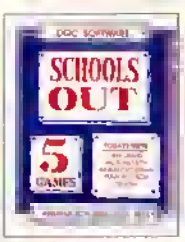
Even more fun was in store for us in the July issue when we reviewed a disc rejoicing in the faintly intriguing title of The Complete Home Entertainment Centre. We couldn't wait to find out what it was all about.

Well, the title of this particular game compilation proved itself no idle hoast, with a selection of card games, word searches, dominoes, backgammon and – wait for it – for the first time ever, darts for the PCW, all available on one bumper disc. The game-play was addictive, the graphics on the screen displays very slick indeed. This was, very definitely, one of the most professional programs which graced our office PCW screens during 1990.

The Complete Home Entertainment Centre will make an ideal gift for any PCW owner who believes in making their work fun or, indeed, their fun work. Full marks.

Turn to page 34 for our review of CDS' brand new board and disc game, Tank Attack.





11 Educational software

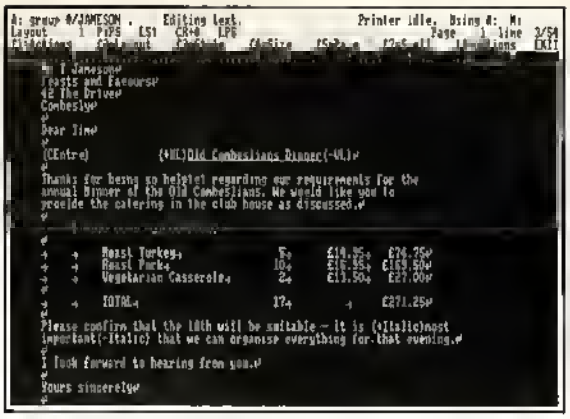
Ultimate Quiz/Junior Playtime/School's Out ● DGC 0274 636475

(Issue 39, page 25 and issue 49, 58/9)

If there's one thing that we are going to leave 1990 being absolutely convinced of, it's that good educational software for the PCW and David Greenhough Computing are virtually synonymous.

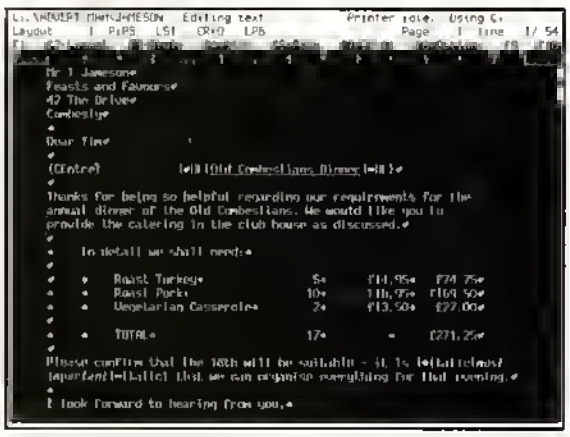
In our December '89 issue, we reviewed the latest version of Ultimate Quiz, a collection of ten quizzes on one disc each consisting of 100 multiple choice questions - enough to keep even the most staunch trivia addict occupied for a while. There are foreign language translation questions, geography, history and sports puzzlers plus some general trivia. You can even 'edit' the questions so that the package can be customised to suit just about anyone's tastes; Ultimate Quiz will provide hours of fun to PCW-users of all ages and persuasions.

In October, DGC again showed us that the PCW can be a perfectly valid educational tool with the release of Junior Playtime (for four- to eight-year-olds) and School's Out (for seven- to 14-year-olds). Each disc consisted of a compilation of games-cum-learning aids – for example, mazes, word scrambles, match the pairs and snake in the grass were all prominent on the first disc, while the second played host to some slightly more refined pastimes like Othello, Four in a Row and, in some cases, quite complex word searches. Our verdict: very addictive fun for all the family.



Typed using LocoScript
on an Amstrad PCW8256

Spot the Difference



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Lay down the rules

This month, Sophie Lankenau looks at the use of ruler lines and tabs – Protext's two vital basic ingredients in the making of a perfect page layout

We have already seen how the speed of Protext in the business of text production and manipulation can make word processing a headache free affair. When it comes to the actual appearance of the word on the finished page, Protext can take the task on with the minimum of fuss and the maximum of speed.

Page layout in Protext involves a completely different process than the LocoScriptian equivalent. The reason that Protext gains extra points for speed in this area of word processing is that everything is done in the same environment; there is no need to summon the assistance of purpose built menus to the screen.

The official line

When you are in editing mode in Protext, you will notice that the screen page is headlined with the letter L, a series of dashes and exclamation marks, and the letter R. This headline is known as the ruler line, and is the key to altering page layout.

The default layout setting which you see on screen dictates the following commands to Protext. The left hand margin is at the position of the letter L; the tabs are indicated by the exclamation marks, each of which is divided by eight characters, and the letter R delineates the right hand margin. The series of dashes allows you to measure the characters between each of the previous specifications.

You can set up a new page layout at any stage of your document, whether it is before you type any text in at all, or mid-paragraph. When you are first getting to grips with layout, it is a good idea to start off using Protext's default setting, so that the changes you are making are more clearly visible.

Type in some text at the start of the page – two or three lines will suffice. At the end of the last line, press [RETURN]. We now want to change the margins of the page so that the text flows into a narrower column on the left hand side. To define the left hand margin, press [SHIFT][#] at the same time. A 'greater than' sign appears on screen. Now, move the cursor along to about a quarter of the way across the page. Type in the letter R at the point where you want the right hand margin to be placed. These two commands now dictate the layout of the text which follows. To bring the new layout into effect, simply press [RETURN], and start typing. If you look to the top of the screen, you will notice that the default ruler line, with its series of dashes and exclamation marks, has been replaced by the new arrangement. When you type in some more text, the word-wrap will occur at the new right hand margin (see screenshot).

The lay of the land

If you practice a few more different ruler line formats, you'll soon become accustomed to the speed and ease with which new layouts can be imposed upon a document.

With a selection of different layouts on the screen, try moving the cursor around the text, using the [PAGE] key to go to the foot of the document, and [ALT][PAGE] to move back up to the top. As you pass through different formats, watch the ruler lines changing on your journey.

You will probably want to use one style of layout more than others, and the Protext default layout could well be the ideal one to use for your work. If you are using any other kind of layout, and you need to return to Protext's default version, press [ALT][D], and the original ruler lines will be restored.

This does not mean that any text arranged in a different format on the page will automatically be relayed in the style of the default; it only affects the next line of text to be typed in.

If the Protext default layout is not the one which you want as your own, you can create one that is. With the cursor at the top of the page, press [SHIFT][#] to set the left margin, and type in 'r' at the point where ➤

Go with the flow

You can flow existing text into a new layout structure by a press of the [RELAY] key. Decide the layout which you want, and make sure that the ruler line sits directly above the relevant text. Press [RELAY] and watch the document reform paragraph by paragraph.

If you want to revert back to the original layout, move the cursor to the point where the text begins, and press [ALT][R] for Restore. The previous layout will now preside over the document, and you can go back through with the [RELAY] key rearranging the text as necessary.

Putting the theory into practice

Office menager Yvonne Lloyd gives us her verdict on Protext's methods of layout.

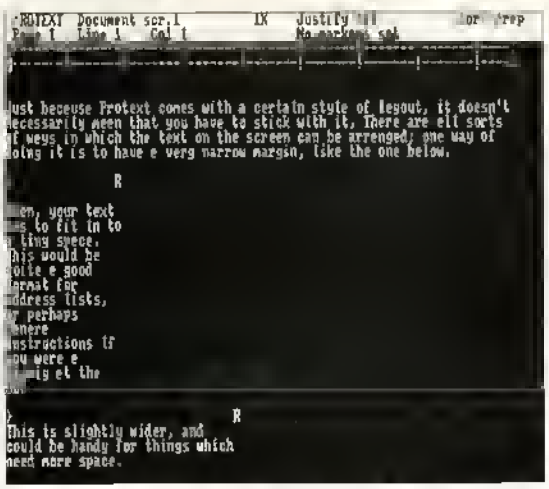
"Apart from the very useful document template, LocoScript provides only right and left hand margins to assist the operator, making it necessary for the typist to to set up a layout for each new item of work. The Protext ruler line, which is continuously displayed at the top of the screen, and which shows left and right margins, together with sensibly located, equidistant tabulator points, would obviate the need to tamper with the layout at all, except in the most complex of documents.

Loco lover Yvonne Lloyd gets to grips with Protext's tabs and ruler lines

Pretending that I had the misfortune to be landed with such a piece of typing, I put the Protext system of ruler lines through its paces - and was delighted with the simplicity of the operation. I was particularly pleased with the way in which you do not have to leave the document; you just start a new line, type in > for the left hand margin, and R for the right, and then exclamation marks for simple tabs, and full stops for decimal tabs. I like the fact that you can see each different layout on the screen as you work.

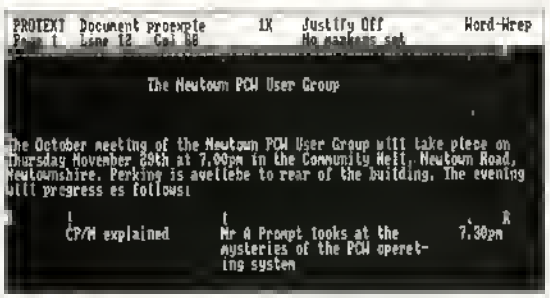
The lack of a similar display in LocoScript has had me screaming in the past, since it is so easy to delete the whole new layout, particularly as the text has moved down a line when one returns to the document. I am also incapable of distinguishing between the LocoScript choices of 'Change Layout' and 'New Layout', and nearly always select the wrong one.

I do wonder why the Protext program does not display the tabulator and return arrows automatically. I cannot think of circumstances in which I would not wish to see these displayed; however, others may feel differently, and it is simple enough to press [ALT] T to make the display appear and remain on screen."



Protext allows you to create any number of different layouts in a document - without having to leave edit mode. The > and R signs constitute the 'ruler line', which is invisible on the printed page

You can flow existing text into any layout form, by setting up a ruler line above the text, and pressing the [RELAY] key. Narrow margins like the one above could be handy for script writers



Here, we see how two simple tabs (shown by exclamation marks) help clarify information. The decimal tab (a full stop) arranges numerical information into neat, uniform order

The final document is all the neater for the use of simple and decimal tabs. If you want to revert to the layout at the top of the page, press [ALT][D], and the default layout is restored

you want the right hand margin to be. Now, when you press [RETURN] and begin entering text, Protext recognises the new ruler line as the default setting.

So, if you are using a different layout and you want to return to your specified default, the command [ALT][D] will ensure that it is re-imposed on the document.

Be prepared

The layouts which you set up need not have to be re-typed every time you want to use them. You can only have one actual default layout, but you can use the [CUT], [COPY] and [PASTE] keys to move other layouts around the document you are working on.

You could even define a given layout as a block, by placing the cursor over the > and pressing [SHIFT][+], then repeating the procedure with the cursor to the right of the letter r.

If you press [STOP] and go into command mode, you can save that block or layout under a name which is likely to jog your memory – say, 'address', or 'list' depending on the layout you are dealing with. Then, when you needed to call upon that layout in future work, you can simply use the merge command to draft it in to your document.

This might not sound like the kind of time-saving procedure beloved of Protext, but it could be very useful if you organise your discs so that similar work is kept together. Having the appropriate layouts permanently to hand will save you time in the long run.

Of course, there is more to layouts than simple left and right hand margins. The use of tabs is a handy way to impose indentation on to a document, and is far more accurate than trying to achieve the same effect by pressing the spacebar for a certain, predetermined number of characters.

Put it on the tab

As we mentioned earlier, the tab command is represented in the ruler line by an exclamation mark. The Protext default layout contains eight tabs, each of which are separated by eight dashes, or characters.

This might well be suitable for your needs as a default setting, but when you want to arrange text in a different way, then inserting tabs into a new ruler line will ensure that text is aligned where you want it to be.

Say you were drawing up a programme of events for a club or social evening – lets say a meeting of the Newtown PCW User Group – which is to be distributed among club members. It is likely that the document will need a heading – centred, or over to the left hand edge of the page.

As this is the start of the document, there is no need to stray from the Protext default layout at this stage. Although it is perfectly simple to set up a 'dedicated' layout for this information, it will only be appearing once within our document. So, for the moment, use the cursor and [RETURN] keys in the usual way to position this text.

With the heading installed, you might want to follow on with a few lines of introduction – which, again, can be done within the bounds of the Protext default layout. When you are ready to start 'timetabling' the events, press [RETURN] at the end of the line you are working on. Now, press [SHIFT][#] as before at the cursor point, to establish the left hand margin of your page.

The first piece of information which needs to be entered could be the announcement of the 'event' – say, 'CP/M explained', or 'LocoScript Lowdown'. It will need to be indented, and you can build a tab into the layout to ensure that it is.

Move the cursor to the position where you want the information to start, and type in an exclamation mark. At the end of the line press [RETURN] and go on to the next line. Look out for the change in the ruler line.

If you press the [TAB] key, the cursor will move to the position of the exclamation mark on the ruler line. You can then type in the information which you require.

You can set up any number of tabs in one ruler line. So, in our document, we could set up a second tab for the name of the speaker or details of the event (see screenshot).

Get to the point

Where figures are concerned, the use of a decimal tab will ensure that everything is correctly aligned. To mark out a spot for a decimal tab, simply insert a full stop at the appropriate place. Back in the document, use the tab key to move to the place where you want to type the figures in. In our document, we will be putting the time of the event close to right hand margin. As you type the details in, notice how the text appears from right to left. As soon you put a full stop in – as in, say, 7.00pm, the next figures will appear to the right of the mark (see screenshot).

You can stop and check where you have put the tabs at any point during your work; simply press [ALT][T] and the markers will appear. To remove them, press [ALT][T] again. Many people prefer to keep the tab markers permanently on display for reference; others find them distracting. You will soon discover which arrangement suits you best.

Incidentally, the marks on the page which constitute the ruler lines - the > sign, exclamation marks and full stops - will not appear on the page when the document is printed out; they are simply codes which Protext uses for direction while the document is being created.

Next month, we will be looking at different kinds of codes – known as stored commands – which play a part in the way Protext presents text. These, coupled with layout skills, will prepare you for document printing.

fun school 3

Learning is now even more fun!

Fun School 3 is everything you – and your children – ever wanted from educational software: **SIX** challenging programs in each pack which fulfil the exacting requirements of the National Curriculum. Plus: Stunning graphics; exciting sounds; carefully structured levels so your children can have fun and learn at their own pace. And all are designed by the winning team which created **Fun School 2**, the biggest-selling educational package ever!

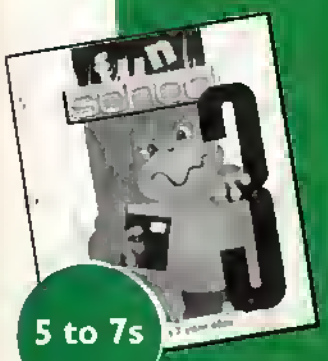
On sale at top dealers nationwide. Selected formats available at larger branches of WH Smith and Boots.

PCW Screen Shots

Under 5s

Count up to nine to help teddy get the honey

Pair the large letters at the alphabet fair

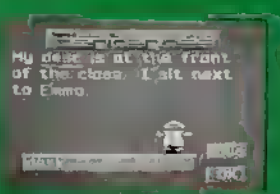


5 to 7s

Tell the time and watch the clock come alive!

Guide the frog from log to log to solve the sums

Over 7s



Correct spelling, grammar and punctuation mistakes

Follow the directions to find the buried treasure

On Sale for Amstrad PCW in November

• Atari ST • Amiga • PC • Amstrad PCW
£24.99
• Spectrum • C64 • Amstrad CPC
£12.99 (tape) £16.99 (disc)
In the autumn: BBC, Electron and Archimedes

DATABASE EDUCATIONAL SOFTWARE

Format	Under 5s		5 to 7s		Over 7s	
	Tape	Disc	Tape	Disc	Tape	Disc
Atari ST		9490		9491		9492
Amiga		9921		9922		9923
PC 5.25'		5891		5892		5893
PC 3.5'		5894		5895		5896
Amstrad PCW		*5211*		*5212*		*5213*
Spectrum	9084	9085	9086	9087	9088	9089
Commodore 64	9076	9077	9078	9079	9080	9081
Amstrad CPC	6189	6190	6191	6192	6193	6194

Send to: *Database Direct, FREEPOST, Ellesmere Port, South Wirral L65 3EB. Order hotline:* 051-357 2961

Please supply Fun School 3 for the code number(s) circled
☐ Cheque payable to Database Software
☐ Please debit my Access/Visa card no.

Expiry date: ☐☐

Signed _____
Add £2 per program for Europe & Eire (£5 Overseas).
Name _____
Address _____
_____
_____
Postcode _____

THE WEST OF BRITAIN

YOU MUST ADD V.A.T. TO OUR PRICES

AMSTRAD PCW's With 12 months on site warranty plus FREE WBBS Ltd. DISC containing DATABASE, GRAPHS PACK, PSYCHOLOGICAL TEST and GAMES PLUS-A FULLY FEATURED EVALUATION PACK OF 'SIMPLE ACCOUNTS II' BY CORNIX SOFTWARE. CORNIX software is amongst the best British software available - a GREAT offer. And there's more! - We also supply you with a £5.00 off voucher to enable you to pick up any of the REELTIME training courses we advertise. Go on - treat yourself!

PCW8256 - Green screen, single drive, 256k Ram. (Can be expanded to 8512) £347.00
PCW8512 - Green screen, twin drive, 512k Ram. 2nd drive high density.....£434.00
PCW9512 - Black and white screen, single high density drive, Daisywheel. £485.00

PCW starter packs - all together now!

10 x CF2 3" discs / one of which will be our free gift pack disc (see above) /AMS30L locking disc box + 2000 sheets listing paper (11" x9.5") 3 printer ribbons /drive cleaner & dust covers ALL FOR THE BUNDLED PRICE OF £60.00

State machine type when ordering & state fabric or carbon ribbons

Changing to an IBM COMPATIBLE???
Contact us re prices and specification on the following (and more!):
AMSTRAD - Entire range.
OSICOM - 8810 - 286 - 386 (very good)
SANYO - not the cheapest but excellent
TANDON - innovative range - excellent.
OLIVETTI, SAMSUNG, CAMBRIDGE, etc etc

••• LINK YOUR PCW TO A PC! •••
Like to run your accounts on a PC but use your PCW as a workstation? Send for details of Compact Accounts PC2PC!

OUR GUARANTEE
Is a bit special. If any computer or printer bought from us (without on-site maintenance being offered) goes wrong under warranty we will collect repair and return at our cost.
All you have to do is telephone!

Memory Upgrade - for PCW8256...£19.80
256k upgrade takes your memory up to that of the 8512. Recommended for use with Locospell and Microdesign II. Very easy to fit - full instructions included.

** VERY SPECIAL OFFER ** purchase the above upgrade at the same time as the PACE or FD4 drive and save.....£4.50

PACE - 5.25" 2nd drive with its own built in interface & power supply - TDOS software allows data transfer from PCW/PC/PCW! Very easy to fit. Also works as fully functional 2nd CP/M or LOCOSCRIPT drive £114.00

•••••

••• PCW 2nd 3" drive (FD4) •••
For 9512 or 8256. 1Mb (720k formatted) internal drive with complete fitting instructions (Amstrad branded)....£91.00

•••••

S.C.A. THE CREAM OF THE CROP!
THE RamPac that supercharges your PCW!!! Just plugs onto expansion port to provide extra area of RAM. Through connector allows continued use of other peripherals - Locomotive tested!

512k RamPac £99.00
768k RamPac.....£119.00
1.5Mb RamPac £199.00

RS232 SERIAL/PARALLEL INTERFACES
With Real Time Clock.....£51.00
Without Real Time Clock.....£42.50

*** PCW Hard Discs for the easy life ***

Diamond 20Mb PCW Hard Disc.....£379.00
Diamond 32Mb PCW Hard Disc.....£459.00
Diamond 48Mb PCW Hard Disc.....£539.00
Through connectors can be fitted AT THE TIME OF ORDERING ONLY to allow an RS232 interface etc to be fitted at the same time as the Diamond disc

THE ABOVE RANGE CAN BE SHARED BY MULTIPLE PCW'S - DETAILS AVAILABLE.

* NEW * NEW * NEW * NEW * NEW * NEW *

The NEW HardPak - no bigger than an RS232 interface - plugs on in same way.
HardPak 20Mb hard disc.....£494.00
HardPak 40Mb hard disc.....£594.00
No cables-no messing-just brilliant!
AND THAT'S NOT ALL THAT'S NEW!

NEW SPRINTER : Makes your PCW nearly 2.5 times as fast! Runs faster than a standard PC Compatible!
SPRINTER: fix to expansion port.....£77.00
SPRINTER: with 256k of Ram £106.00
SPRINTER: with 512k of Ram £135.00
SPRINTER: with 768k of Ram £193.00
HardPak & Sprinter details available.

MIRACLE TECHNOLOGY MODEMS
WS4000PCW, complete with Integral PCW interface & connecting lead!.....£147.80

PACE MODEMS
Linnett Intelligent, V21/V23.....£130.40
Cable to PCW Interface £13.90
Sage chit chat Combo.....£62.50

****
* **BBC Dust Cover Set - simply the best** *
* PCW8256/8512 - 3 piece grey.....£10.40 *
* PCW9512 3 piece ivory.....£12.13 *
* PCI 640/1512 state colour/mono.....£7.85 *
* Amstrad PPC.....£5.20 *
* Pace 5.25" disc drive cover.....£5.00 *
****

SUNDRIES
Printer stand - any width - rugged £14.75
Printer cleaning kit-PCW8000's £14.60
Mouse Mat £4.35
'Margin Maker' - aligns paper £9.90
Spike Protector plug - helps protect computer or other equipment against power surges (we use them).....£10.25
"Dongle" - if you own an 'Export' PCW you will need this gadget to link to Interface/RamPac etc. Our price £17.00

DISCS AT SPECIAL PRICES!

CF2	3"	Amsoft	PCW/CPC x 5	£11.00
		Amsoft	x10	£18.50
		Amsoft	x20	£36.40
		Amsoft	x30	£52.50
		Amsoft	x40	£71.20
CF2	3"	Maxell	PCW/CPC x 5	£10.40
		Maxell	x10	£16.80
		Maxell	x20	£33.00
		Maxell	x30	£48.60
		Maxell	x40	£64.00

Maxell individually cased discs are available as per the Amsoft prices above.

5.25" Bulk-Unbranded	x25	£10.45
5.25" Bulk-Unbranded	x50	£17.40
5.25" 3M Brand	x10	£9.80
3.5" Bulk-Unbranded	x10	£8.50
3.5" Bulk-Unbranded	x25	£19.00
3.5" 3M Brand	x10	£12.80

RIBBON RE-INK AND RIBBON REFRESH!

NEW OUT - 'RIBBON RE-INK' contains no propellant. A black re-inking spray suitable for most fabric ribbon types. Now more environment friendly! £11.00
RIBBON REFRESH - the old favourite...£7.80

DISC STORAGE BOXES
AMS30L (Ams. b'd) holds 30-locks ..£8.65
DS40L 3"/3.5" - lockable £8.50
DS550L 5.25" (holds 50) lockable £8.50

PRINTER RIBBONS

PCW 8256/8512 - dot matrix printer:

FABRIC (14m length)	x 2	£6.50
	x10	£22.25
CARBON MULTISTRIKE	x 2	£6.50
	x10	£29.25

PCW 9512 - daisywheel printer:

CARBON MULTISTRIKE	x 2	£6.00
	x10	£27.00
FABRIC TYPE	x 2	£6.00
	x10	£27.00

AMSTRAD BRANDED PRINTER RIBBONS
PCW8000 Fabric or Carbon Ms x 2 ...£13.00
PCW9512 Fabric or Carbon Ms x 2 ...£13.00

PCW8256/8512 COLOUR RIBBONS
Phone for availability x 2.....£11.80

SMALL SELECTION OF OTHER PRINT RIBBONS

CITIZEN	Swift 24	x 2	£9.00
	Swift 24 Colour	x 2	£29.00
	120D	x 2	£7.00
	HOP40	x 2	£15.60
	HOP40 Colour	x 2	£39.00
	HQP45	x 2	£20.80
AMSTRAD	DMP 2000/3000	x 2	£7.90
	LQ3500	x 2	£13.50
	LQ5000	x 2	£17.50
STAR	LC10	x 2	£6.30
	LC24-10	x 2	£7.10
EPSON	LQ400	x 2	£11.50
	LQ500	x 2	£11.80

We supply exactly what you order - please make sure that what you are ordering is going to be right for you! We do not sell on approval

COMPUTER PAPER

11" x 9.5" Continuous Listing:-
SP/05 1 sheet thick - 500 sheets £9.80
SP/10 1 sheet thick - 1000 sheets £11.30
SP/20 1 sheet thick - 2000 sheets £15.60
DP/05 2 sheets carbonless - 500....£15.60
DP/10 2 sheets carbonless - 1000....£24.30

11" x 14" Continuous (wide carriage):-
1 sheet thick - 500 sheets £9.00
1 sheet thick - 1000 sheets £15.75
1 sheet thick - 2000 sheets £22.50

A4 - (True A4) 80 gsm - Continuous:-
Plain white/micro perf x 500.....£13.90
Plain white/micro perf x 1000.....£19.95
Plain white/micro perf x 2000.....£33.50
A4 - Single sheets - white x 500.....£8.25
A4 - Single sheets - white x 1000....£13.75
A4 - Single sheets - blue x 1000 .....£17.75

LABELS - with sprocket holes:-
One wide 3 1/2"x1 7/16" - 500 .....£9.95
One wide 3 1/2"x1 7/16" - 1000 .....£13.75
One wide 3 1/2"x1 7/16" - 2000.....£22.50
One wide 3 1/2"x1 7/16" - 4000.....£42.50

AMSTRAD PCW SOFTWARE

THE COMPOSERS PEN II - this is the new version. Well worth waiting for £62.00
FLIPPER II PLUS (not for PCW8256)....£26.00

The "8000 PLUS COLLECTION"
'The most comprehensive compilation of Amstrad PCW Hints, Tips, Shortcuts and Useful Programs ever published.' Total of book + disc = £14.60 all inc.

WORDPROCESSING (see also Books below)

PROTEXT - THE FULL SYSTEM: .....£32.90 includes a very fast wordprocessor, a spell-checker and a superb mail-merge utility that is almost a programming language in itself. The latest version.

PRO-EAZE - needs Protext to run.....£15.00 a set of utilities produced especially for Protext users containing a variety of automatically generated invoice layouts/ delivery notes etc. All can be customised and carry out calculations automatically. Ideal for the small to medium sized business.

It is always important to state the type of PCW you own when you order!

LocoScript II £21.70
LocoCombo-LocoScript II & Spell...£27.00
LocoMail & File for which PCW? £33.70
LocoFile - state which PCW used.....£22.65
New Thesaurus-use with LocoFile.....£12.80
LocoMail - use with Locoscript II.....£21.00
LocoSpell - use with Locoscript II ...£18.20
LocoFont I (10 fonts) *.....£14.70
LocoFont II (6 fonts) *.....£11.25
24 Pin Printer Drivers Disc .....POA
LocoScript II + LocoFile .....POA

OTHER LOCOMOTIVE ITEMS AVAILABLE
Digita 'E' Type-typewriter emul.....£24.15
M.A.S.S. Easy Labeller - excellent ...£21.00
More than a simple labeller - ideal for anything from greetings labels to consecutively numbered raffle tickets.

SPREADSHEETS
Supercalc II - best general buy £34.50
Cracker II Turbo - advanced.....£32.00

DATABASES
Cornix Card Index - easy to use £25.90
Masterfile 8000-best general buy.....£28.00
dBase II - very powerful £42.00
Prodata - for Protext users £47.45
Digita Datastore II.....£23.40
Camsoft Cambase.....£45.00
see LOCOFILE in wordprocessing

NOT ONLY BUT ALSO!
Contact us for dictating machines, telephones, typewriters, shredders, photocopiers, computer furniture, video recorders, fax machines, pens in bulk, office equipment and office supplies of all types!

AMSTRAD PCW 9512 DAISYWHEELS
ALL TYPES OF U.K. WHEELS.....£5.90
PLEASE TELEPHONE FOR ADVICE.

BOOKS - ZERO RATED SO DO NOT ADD VAT: LARGER BOOK LIST AVAILABLE

Locoscript II user guide	£19.95	Sharpbenders - unleash potential	£25.00
As above but spiral bound.	P.O.A.	Moving into management	£8.95
Locomail user guide	£19.95	The small business handbook	£9.95
Locospell user guide	£14.95	Strategic management/small Business's	£17.50
Locofile user guide	£19.95	Working with dBase II	£9.95
Mallard Basic manual for PCW	£9.95	Supercalc prompt: Supercalc 3	£9.95
Protext, a PCW users guide	£9.95	Locoscript II/Mail/Spell/File	£10.95
Successful credit control	£17.95	Introducing C	£12.95
[illegible]		[illegible]	
Directors personal liability	£19.50	Using the Amstrad PCW W.P.	£9.95

IF ONLY ORDERING ONE BOOK PLEASE ADD £2.00 (PLUS VAT) TO COVER CARRIAGE...

To place an order by telephone we will need to know the following:

1. Today's date.
2. Your name and address.
3. Your telephone number in case of problems.
4. The name of the magazine where you saw this advert.
5. The type and number of the credit card you wish us to debit.
6. The expiry date of the card.
7. The item(s) you wish to purchase making sure we know exactly which type of machine it is to work with.

☆ WE WISH ALL OUR CUSTOMERS A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR!!! ☆
Please make Cheques/P.O's payable to "W.B.B.S. Ltd."

BUSINESS SERVICES

Carriage is free on orders over £10.00 net - if less please see below

ACCOUNTS PACKAGES FOR THE PCW

If you are unsure which package you need for your business please 'phone and we will describe the various packages in clear jargonless terms - but leave you to decide

CONNECT SYSTEMS - MONEY MANAGER PCW

GREAT VALUE!.....£28.25
This is the very latest version from the Connect stables - a top seller!

D.R.S. - Total Accounting.....£68.00
Please contact us for details
Meridian Stockmarket.....£95.00

CORNIX SOFTWARE RANGE

Cornix software is amongst the best of some very good British software so if you are looking for easy to use but very effective products you need look no further - go on treat yourself to some quality software!

Simple Accounts II - PCW.....£46.00
Invoicing - PCW.....£36.90
Job Estimating v2 - PCW.....£48.50
Product Costing v2 - PCW.....£48.50

MICRO SIMPLEX

MICRO SIMPLEX A/Cs & VAT MADE SIMPLE
Whatever your business this pack saves you time & effort by simply preparing your day to day accounts and quarterly VAT returns.
Particularly suited to shop-keepers as will cope with Retailers VAT schemes A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H&J & Pharmacy Scheme B. Also suited to any small business used to keeping its books weekly.....£99.00

MICRO SIMPLEX PUB STOCK.....£99.00
Most stock controls work on a decimal basis - but bottles come in crates!!!

COMPACT ACCOUNTS

We use Compact for our own accounts system. The best there is on the PCW!
COMPACT ACCOUNTS.....£148.00
Sales/Purchase/Nominal Ledgers plus Invoicing/Report Writer & Interfacer
COMPACT ACCOUNTS PLUS.....£178.00
As above plus Stock Control & Sales Order Processing.
COMPACT COMPLETE ACCOUNTS.....£258.00
This new bundle provides everything you need to run a business including Payroll.
FULL DETAILS AVAILABLE. *
FULL RANGE OF STATIONERY AVAILABLE

SAGE ACCOUNTS

Popular Accounts.....£54.00
Popular Accounts Plus.....£85.00
Popular Invoicing.....£40.00
Popular Payroll.....£40.00

CAVALIER SOFTWARE

Simple Invoicing.....£30.39
Instock.....£65.00
Intact.....£65.00
Inbusiness (integrated).....£130.00
Diner: Restaurant/Take Away A/C's.....£52.13
Homeview: Estate Agents - Prog. £169.95
Newsboy: Newspaper Del. - Prog. £52.13
Re-Chord: Music Library - Prog.....£26.04

CAMSOFT ACCOUNTS

PSIL - Integrated, Stock/Inv./Sales/Purch/Nom.....£149.00
PSPN - Int. Sales/Purch./Nom.....£89.00
PPAY - Payroll.....£45.00

MAP ACCOUNTS

Integrated Accounts.....£89.80
Other Map ledgers mostly at.....£39.00

DIGITA

Business Controller.....£44.00
Personal Tax Planner.....£90.00

DESKTOP PUBLISHING --- DESIGN --- GRAPHICS

MICRO DESIGN II - A revolution in desktop publishing on the Amstrad PCW! £33.00

RUNS ON the PCW8256/8512/9512 (the PCW9512 needs a dot matrix printer to print).
"The manual is comprehensive, immensely friendly, and will lead you where you want to go." (New Computer Express) - and it's 150 pages long. IMPORT FILES FROM: Locoscript 2, Protext, Wordstar, Masterscan, Stop Press and other PCW software.
* * TEXT EDITING ; TYPESETTING : FONT DESIGN : GRAPHICS : DIAGRAMS : LOGOS * *
"The Rolls Royce of PCW desktop publishing" (Amstrad PCW Magazine).

NEW FROM THE PRODUCERS OF MICRODESIGN II - PROSCAN - A HAND HELD SCANNER FOR THE PCW!!

ProScan - from CREATIVE TECHNOLOGY. A brilliant new triumph fr[illegible]
Design II. "Excellent quality. Easy to use. Cheap." 8000 Plus Magazines verdict - scoring 20 out of a possible 20!!! First CREATIVE TECHNOLOGY brought you the software & now the hardware to turn your PCW into a serious dtp machine.
THIS NEW SCANNER IS SO GOOD THAT YOU MUST SEND FOR DETAILS.....£156.45

Microdesign II + Kempston Mouse & Interface (Includes Jeeves & Daalarax).....£84.00
Microdesign II + Logitech/AMX Mouse & Interface (with through port).....£88.00
Stop Press + Mouse & Interface.....£80.70
Stop Press - Software Only.....£28.50
Desktop Publisher & Mouse.....£51.99
Master Scan.....£15.45
Master Pack (scan and paint).....£48.50
Master Scan not for professional use.
Logitech/AMX Mouse + Interface.....£42.50
Kempston Mouse + Interface.....£54.00

PCW DRAW - at last a professional drafting program for the PCW!.....£33.00

INTEGRATED PCW SOFTWARE PACKS

MINI OFFICE PRO-Suits all PCWs.....£25.87

DIGITA SYSTEM 3 (NEW OUT!) £29.80

Consists of 3 modules:
STOCK CONTROL
INVOICING/SALES LEDGER
CASHFLOW CONTROLLER
Not a full accounts pack but rather a suite of 'tools', any of which may be implemented easily into a manual system providing:
* INSTANT MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS
* PROFESSIONAL INVOICES, STATEMENTS
* EFFECTIVE STOCK CONTROL
* V.A.T. REPORTS

HiSoft Software

HiSoft Pascal80.....£33.85
Extremely fast with GSX graphics.
HiSoft C.....£33.85
Very popular integer C compiler
HiSoft Devpac80.....£33.85
Version 2. Very compact.
FTL Modula-2.....£36.80
Complete Modula-2 development-fast
FTL Editor Toolkit.....£29.00
Complete Modula-2 source to editor
FTL APK.....£29.00
Contains an enhanced linker, overlay manager and redundant code remover.
Nevada COBOL.....£33.85
Close to ANSI-74 COBOL.
HiSoft FORTH.....£17.35
Easy to use FORTH - very fast.
Knife Plus.....£17.35
The complete disc recovery system with sector copier and build-file option. Essential utility for PCW.

ARNOR CP/M LANGUAGES

MAXAM II.....£39.00
Complete PC/M machine code development system.
'C'.....£27.21
Complete C development system.
BCPL.....£19.90
Flexible, fast, general purpose programming language.

AMSTRAD PCW9512 AUTOMATIC SHEET-FEEDER

Complete with necessary software....P.O.A.

TRAINING

The old 80/20 rule states that: "80% of computer users use only 20% of their computers capability!" Now is your chance to break the mould!!!

REELTIME

Top quality training course on disc with instructor on audio tape

RT-LocoScript II - PCW9512.....£29.90
RT-LocoScript - PCW8256/8512.....£29.90
RT-LocoScript II - PCW8256/8512.....£29.90
RT-CP/M-use your computer!.....£29.90
RT-SuperCalc II.....£29.90
RT-dBase II.....£29.90
DESIGNED ESPECIALLY TO HELP NEW USERS

WE SUPPLY EXACTLY WHAT YOU ORDER - PLEASE MAKE SURE THAT WHAT YOU ARE ORDERING IS GOING TO BE RIGHT FOR YOU! SORRY WE DO NOT SELL ON APPROVAL!!!

INTRASET SOFTWARE RANGE FOR THE PCW

COURSEMASTER.....£17.35
The computer horseracing aid program
POOLSMASTER.....£17.35
the complete football pools predictor
PERM-MASTER.....£15.61
for BLOCK PERMS & SINGLE LINE PLANS
£ PROFIT FROM YOUR MICRO.....£9.80
use it to make extra income!
THE GRAPHOLOGIST.....£43.43
analyse yours or others handwriting
CASHMASTER.....£26.04
master your own finances - easy to use.
SPECIAL OFFERS:
POOLSMASTER + PERM-MASTER...£32.13
POOLS, PERM + COURSEMASTER..£43.43
Full details are available from us.

PLEASE NOTE THIS ADVERT CONSTITUTES JUST A TINY PART OF OUR RANGE OF PRODUCTS (see 'Not Only But Also').WE NOW HAVE A FULL COLOUR CATALOGUE LISTING THOUSANDS OF LINES OF OFFICE EQUIPMENT & OFFICE SUPPLIES (useful in the home too!). FOR A COPY OF THIS 576 PAGE CATALOGUE PLEASE SEND £4.35 (£5.00 inc) - and get a £5.00 voucher against ANY product we currently sell

EDUCATIONAL SOFTWARE

IANSYST

Clash Course in Typing.....£15.60
Two Fingers To Touch Typing.....£15.60

KOSMOS LANGUAGE TUTORS

French, German, Spanish & Italian - very flexible courses - each just.....£13.75

APEX BUSINESS LANGUAGE TUTORS

Business French/German/Spanish tutors each course just.....£99.00

D.G.C. EDUCATIONAL SOFTWARE

Junior Playtime 4-8 years.....£12.90
Crossgrd (crossword puzzles).....£12.90
Schools Out (5 games).....£12.90
Ultimate Quiz.....£12.90
Sums.....£12.90
Contact us for details of this range.

LCL - IF YOU WISH TO STUDY SERIOUSLY
LCL: Micro Maths 8yrs to adult.....£19.90
LCL: Micro English 8 to adult.....£19.90

SCHOOL SOFTWARE

Better Spelling - age 8 to adult.....£12.90
Magic Maths - age 4-8 years.....£12.90
Maths Mania - age 8-12 years.....£12.90
Better Maths - age 12-16 years.....£12.90
Physics, Chemistry or Biology age 12-16 years : EACH AT.....£16.00

EDUCATIONAL & FUN!

BOURNE EDUCATIONAL SOFTWARE

Animal, Mineral, Vegetable.....£11.99
World Wise.....£11.99
Two excellent packs for ages 3 - 99 years!

TOPOLOGIKA

Giantkiller (maths adv. 9-16 yrs).....£12.85
Yes Chancellor! (UK Economy sim).....£12.85

PCW LEISURE

*** GET RICH QUICK - PERHAPS? ***
Pro-Punter (Racing Bet Aid).....£39.00
Pro-Pools (Forecasting Aid).....£34.60

Although designed as forecasting aids we cannot guarantee results with the above or with the Intraset range!!!

*** ADVENTURE GAMES ***

Corruption.....$.....£16.00
Scapeghost!!!.....£12.50
Lancelot - 3 Adventures in 1.....£13.90
Jinxter.....£16.00

* The Professional Adventure Writer *
* Write your own adventures * £18.00
Mindfighter.....£15.00
Time and Magik - 3 games in 1.....£9.90

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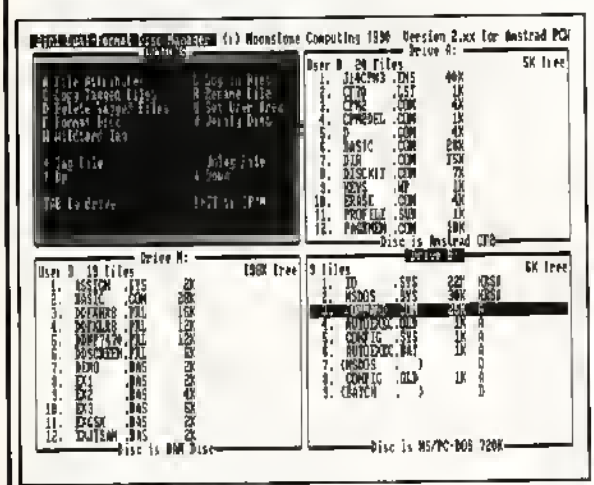

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Print Works

Liz Bruce answers all those quirky queries on printing in LocoScript and answers the $64,000 question - what to ask Santa for

Q Reeently I tried to print a doenment originolly set up for A4 on A5 paper. Although I'm sure I set the printer properly I kept getting o messoge telling me the eurrent poper was different from the intended. I selected 'Use eurrent paper' but it just wouldn't eome out right at oll.

A Because Locoscript is such a flexible and powerful program, confusion can arise between the different options offered. Yes, the printer's paper menu offers a selection of paper types the printer can handle (see picture one) but this does not affect the document you have set up in any way.

The reason is that the printer menu allows you to print out a document on a paper different from the type you have set up for the document itself. This gives you complete flexibility and allows you, for instance, to print the draft version of a document on the cheap 11 inch stationary although the final version will be printed on A4.

It all gets really confusing because the menu setting up the paper the document is intended for, is almost identical to the printer's paper type menu. (See picture two) However, the document paper type is found by going into the document set up [f1], selecting paper [f5], then paper type and ticking the option you want. The printer's paper menu can only be accessed when you are in printer mode, either by pressing [PTR] at any time or by pulling the bail-bar back when you load the printer, then selecting the [f3] paper option.

Further confusion arises, particularly when you want to go to a smaller paper type, such as A5, because although the number of lines allowed on a page, as you work on the screen, is the one fixed and correct for the paper type chosen, the margins are not. If you do not set the margins correctly you will find the printer will simply ignore the ends of any lines which do not fit on to the paper you've set up – see next question.

Q Help! My printer is refusing to print the ends of the lines of some of my orticles. My dealer says there is nothing wrong with the printer and certainly it does work some of the time. But what is wrong if it's not the printer itself?

A This is again due to Locoscript's flexibility. You are not tied to any fixed size of margin, e.g. an inch at either side. You may set any size you like. However, as I've already mentioned, if you set your margins too far apart for the width of the paper you have chosen, you will lose the ends of the lines when you print, as the printer knows they will not fit and simply ignores them.

Your dealer is absolutely correct. There is nothing wrong with your printer if this happens, though it is a common cause of great alarm and despondency and call out service charges for supposedly faulty hardware. When you come to set your margins in the layout, do remember that you are setting them in characters, not inches (this is another common cause of the ends of lines not being printed).

A margin set at 10 in Scale pitch 10 is one inch. But the same margin setting, if the scale pitch is 15, is only 10/15ths of an inch.

Picture one - Spot the difference - the printer's paper type menu.

Do remember you are setting your margins (and tabs) in the scale pitch, not the pitch you have selected for the main pitch of your document and these could well be different.

I know this sounds complicated but it's fairly obvious once it's been explained and it a small price to pay for the versatility of the system.

Q When I re-lond my printer (PCW 9512) with a different type of paper, so that the printer sign is flashing, then seleet the new paper type on the paper menu, the printer won't work but gives the message "Waiting for pnper". I hove to pull the boil-bar forward again then rewind the pnper to the beginning. Why?

A "Why" is because of the way the program controls the 9512 printer, the 8000 series behave differently. Why, I'm not sure but I can tell you how to avoid it.

The 9512 printer assumes that if you select a new paper type, you haven't yet loaded it, so it clears itself and waits to be re-louded. Instead select the new paper type first, then loud the paper and you'll have no more problems.

If you forget and load it first, don't worry. Just do what you have been doing, i.e. pull the bail-bar back, let the paper wind up then re-adjust it to the beginning.

Q Reeently I was printing out a thesis which had notes nt the bottom of eaeh pnge. These were put in as footers and were in pitch 17 and subscript. The first page printed fine but the subsequent pages were all in subscript as was everything I tried to print after thot, even thought they had no subscript commands in them. Resetting the printer had no effeet and in the end I switched off and re-loaded the maehine. The some problem repeated. Although everything printed normally until I tried to print the thesis, as soon os the first page wos printed the printer stuek in subscript. Is there something wrong with my printer (PCW 8256)?

A No. This is, in fact, due to a bug in the Locoscript program and, to be fair, is the only one I've found. If you look at your footer with the word processing codes on the screen ([f8] and tick Codes), you'll find that you have a (+SuB) command at the beginning of your footer text, but no (-SuB) command at the end.

You probably didn't bother to put in the (-SuB) command because you were at the end of the footer anyway and normally that wouldn't matter as the printer would realise that and return to the main pitch choice at the beginning of the next page it printed. However, for some reason, once the printer starts to print in

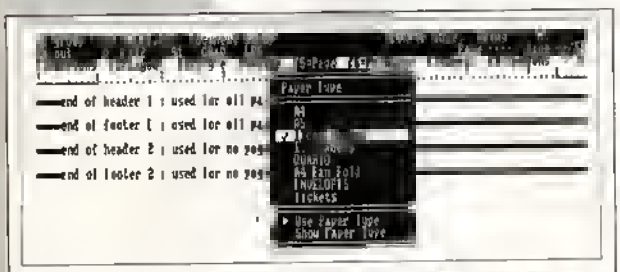
Illuminating illustrations

If you still have a question or two on LocoScript, why not check out our review of Susan's Rogers' Illustrated LocoScript on page 32.

subscript, it continues to do so until it receives a (-SuB) command. This is so even if you try to print another document entirely, which contains no subtext commands at all and even if you reset the printer.

The answer is simple. Make sure that whenever you use a (+SuB) command you put in a corresponding (-SuB) command at the end of the text you want printed in subscript and you'll have no further problems.

As a general rule, it is good practice to do this anyway. If you have been using word processing effects it is a good idea to switch on the codes on the screen and check that there is a minus command for every plus command before you print out. It is too easy, and very frustrating, to print out a document and find that half way through it all turns into italics instead of just one word or phrase.



Picture two - the almost identical menu to set up the paper intended for the document.

Ask Away

Still harbouring a few choice posers on the subject of LocoScript? Why not send them in to LocoScript Surgery, 8000 Plus, Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. All the names are changed to protect the readers' innocence, so don't worry about looking silly.

Q We bought a PCW 8512 recently to use in our small business. We've found it wonderful for doing letters etc. but we're having terrible trouble printing out our invoices on our pre-printed forms. We can't get the Invoice number or Date high enough nor can we get the final totals and VAT low enough. Can you help?

A Unfortunately, pre-printed forms and word processors do not always work together happily. The PCW printers work at six lines to the inch but there is no guarantee that a pre-printed form has been printed to match. That's probably why you can't get things to match up.

There is no easy solution. Fiddling with the line pitch can cause even more problems. You can try it but do not use your Start of Day Disc, so if it all goes wrong the printer will return to normal when you restart you PCW.

You could try setting up the right number of returns in a template, using a line space of 0.5, where necessary, to make things fit rather than a fixed line spacing.

Sometimes these forms are so difficult the only solution is to use Direct Printing. But although this is OK if you have a 9512, it's not easy with a 8000 series printer as it is all but impossible to position the paper accurately for the print head.

You could just throw the whole lot out (but for re-cycling please) and use the machine to print your invoices, putting the relevant address, VAT number, tabs for descriptions and prices etc. in the template but this is not always an option.

If you can't do that, soldier on as best you can but make very sure that no-one re-orders the same forms. When you begin to run low, contact your printer and explain the problem and have the form re-designed to match your PCW.

The other problem – not being able to get the date high enough to match the form – is pretty well insolvable, I'm afraid. It's happening because when the printer knows it is using single sheet paper it takes off six lines at the top and three at the bottom and does not allow you to type on those. It does this because the printer cannot reliably hold the paper tight enough at the beginning and end and if you put text on those lines it might not print out straight.

If you're desperate, you could try setting up a new paper type for your invoices which decreases the top gap. Then try keeping a finger on the paper as it prints the top line.

When you order new forms, consider having them made with a tractor feed for continuous use. This lets you use the very top and bottom of each form and means you can print all your invoices out in a batch.

Sorry I can't be more encouraging It is a situation I come across frequently and it's extremely annoying. I just hope you don't have too large a stock of the current forms to plough through.

Q I have several lists of names and addresses set up for printing and labels. I want to produce lists of these but when I tried to print them on A4 paper I only got one address on each page. I eventually realised that this was because each address ends with an "END PAGE HERE" mark and made a copy of one of the lists then took out all those signs and managed to get a list that way, but surely there's an easier way?

A Yes. All you need to do is fool the printer. Normally it is sensible to be truthful with the printer and always tell it what type of paper has been loaded. However, there is no reason why you must always do this.

To print out a list of your labels, all you need to do is load the printer with the paper you want to print on (it works best if you use continuous paper such as continuous A4) and select 'Labels' on the paper type menu for the printer.

As far as the printer is concerned it is then printing out on labels and it won't notice that the paper passing through it isn't really labels at all.

This technique can be used to print out other small items. If you wanted to print tickets which were only eight lines long, you could set up the paper type as continuous stationary 10 lines long, select that for the printer but actually load continuous A4, for instance.

If you added a footer with a page number in it, you can even number the tickets. ●

DEAR SANTA...

Here's a quick summary of gadgets and add-ons I've personally tried and recommend.

1) The first one is obvious. If you're still using Locoscript 1 (the program which comes packaged with a PCW 8256 or 8512) ask Santa for a copy of Locoscript 2. It makes a huge difference and the manual is a relief after the Loco 1 obscurity.

2) If you work with a lot of information, such as names and addresses, you'll find LOCOFILE makes the data much easier to handle than trying to keep it in word processing form.

3) LOCOSPELL is invaluable, whether you're spelling is good or not. It picks up those horrible errors caused by 'finger trouble' - where you've put in an extra letter or transposed two characters. The first time I used it I checked an article I'd written and sent off some time before – checked to the best of my ability. I found 16 mistakes.

4) Computers are vulnerable to dust, particularly as they build up a static charge. The keyboard will not work properly if it is allowed to get too dirty, so ask for a set of covers. Mention that you'd prefer the transparent ones, as the opaque ones seem to cause problems to new users. There's something about this machine lurking in a corner in it's grey covers that seems to intimidate people...

5) One of the most useful 'gadgets' I've come across is the TEMPMATE (Thurston Techniques). It consists of a backing sheet and an acetate sheet marked in line pitch and characters per inch. To set up a template for either blank paper or a form, you slip your sheet under the acetate and read off exactly where to set margins, tabs etc. Wonderful.

6) For a little fun, ask for a selection of coloured ribbons and paper. A sepia or brown ribbon used with cream or parchment paper is extremely attractive. A wide range of coloured ribbons is available and you can get continuous A4 paper in cream, grey and blue. (SBS)

7) If Santa's feeling generous and you have an 8256, why not ask for a memory upgrade or Ram pack to increase the memory, especially if you're beginning to run short or would like to run some of the add ons such as Locospell. If he's really in a good mood you could ask for a second disc drive as well...

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TOO BUSY TO BACK UP?

We all know that we should keep backup copies of our disks but we rarely do. Copying disks with LocoScript 2 or DISCKIT takes a long time and usually involves many disk swops and it is easy to make mistakes; copying files individually is a chore.

Written especially to reduce the time taken to an absolute minimum, BACKUP will automatically back up your disks either by copying only changed files or by copying selected tracks, whichever is quickest. BACKUP runs as a self-booting "End of Day" disk with friendly LocoScript-like menus and it requires no knowledge of CP/M. It is primarily aimed at LocoScript 2 and CP/M users, but those with only LocoScript 1 will gain some advantage. BACKUP costs only £19.95.

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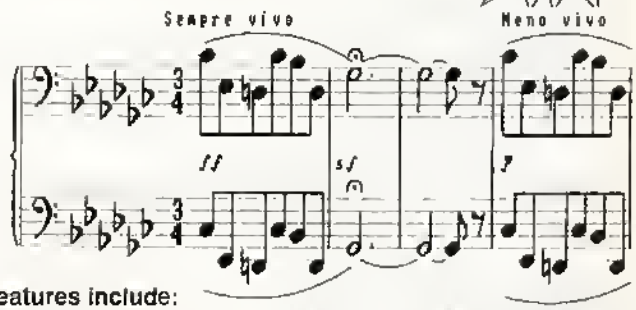

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Advantage graph

Rob Ainsley casts a critical eye over two of Advantage's public domain discs: Logo Logic and Fun With Graphics

Hang it

No idea what this word was. Too clever for me.

A simple version of the children's game 'Hangman'. The words seem reasonably well chosen and should be suitable for children and closet children of sevenish upwards (assuming they haven't already written a better version themselves in assembler).

Able label

.LABEL is a Logo routine that lets you print out disc labels, surprisingly enough. You input a title for a disc and a chunk of text for each side (up to four lines each consisting of a maximum of 20 characters).

It then prints out a label which you can cut and paste straight on to your discs. Watch out though. It can only handle lower case letters and numbers (abc, not ABC), and nothing else: no £, $, dashes, brackets or anything like that. Keep it simple and you'll be all right.

Anagrams mage

Scramble! The answer is countryside – but would the Bard really have had a PCW?

A simple anagrams game that prompts you to guess what the scrambled word is. You can ask for the position of certain letters to be shown.

Your score is displayed in two formats: graphic and numerical format (to a very silly number of decimal places). Some are tricky making it hard for younger users.

Window cleaner

The notes on the Fun disc refer to mysterious files called WINDOW.DOC and/or WINDOW.COM which are not on the disc.

However, a lot of drawing utilities are included – for making circles, boxes, triangles and lines – which are not referred to in the notes.

If you write programs in C or Pascal and would like these functions, the disc is worth nosing around. If not, leave it alone. It's simply too confusing unless you already have an idea what you're doing.

Flying colours

AIRLINER is a simple game and the showpiece of the programs on the Logo disc. You're given a map of Europe and a list of airports. You use the cursors to pilot your plane to the airport arrowed in the list and [ENTER] to land. Towns are marked only with a dot, not a name, so it teaches you a bit of geography as well as being fun for the kids.

Fly around the world with Airliner. For some reason Dublin Airport appears to have been hi-jacked and moved north to Belfast though

Fun with logic

The Fun With Graphics disc should, perhaps, be classed with other famous misnomers such as the Department of Employment and the Ministry of Defence.

It's a collection of potentially interesting, but often frustrating, programs. There's an evolution simulator that doesn't work and a simple drawing program that's fun to use. There's also a bewildering set of things which should be there, that aren't and things which shouldn't be there, that are.

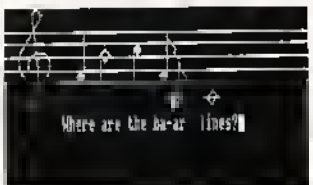
Logo Logic is a collection of simple programs in Logo – a programming language you get free with your PCW, and which is almost worth every penny. The collection can be fun to use and shows some of the potential of the language. To get the Logo programs to work, here is the procedure to follow.

Making a Logo disc. Run up CP/M and at the A> prompt type **PIP [RETURN]**. Now type **M:=A:J*.* [RETURN]** followed by

U.F.O.

A rather boring game that asks you to guess the bearing and range of UFOs, (looking remarkably like dots) on the screen. And, er, that's about it.

Music micro please

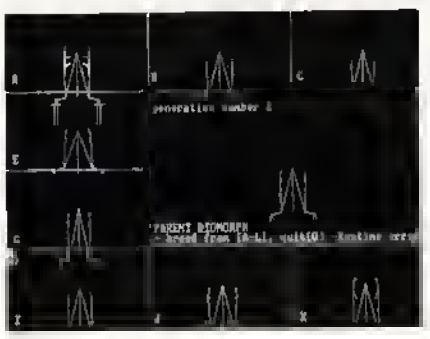


Simple music staves can be printed out in Logo using [EXTRA] [PTR] - but no bar lines.

MUSIC is a nice illustration of how Logo can do something that's almost useful. It lets you print out up to four staves of simple music, although the illustration shows its limitations.

No bar lines, deleting or editing. Nothing remotely complicated like beamed notes or markings. Possibly useful for children learning music.

Hello, I'm Morph



An experiment in evolution that proves, beyond reasonable doubt, that Man did not evolve from television aerials

Morph lives under the impressive title of an evolution simulator. You start with a parent animal, a 'biomorph', and breed 12 offspring from it, selecting the parent for the next generation according to any criteria you like. Random genetic mutations ensure that subtle changes keep appearing and the animal 'evolves' into weird and wonderful shapes.

Public Domain programs are programs written to be distributed free to all and sundry by good-natured programmers who simply want other people to enjoy the fruits of their labour.

Fine. But there is no such thing in the universe as a free lunch and free software has snags. First, you pay a copying fee to the organisation that supplies the disc, though this is minimal and barely covers their costs. Second, as the program is written by an unpaid enthusiast it does does not come with instruction manuals or a technical support telephone number. Sometimes programs may simply not work. The pleasures and frustrations of public domain software are amply demonstrated by these two discs, each £5.95 from Advantage at 56 Bath Road, Cheltenham, Glouc GL53 7HJ (tel. 0242 224340, fax 0242 226755).

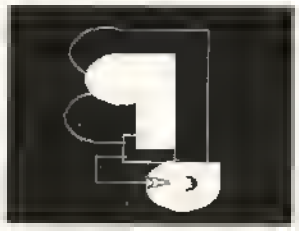
Quick on the draw-2

DRAW is another Logo program that basically quickens up the normal Logo procedure of moving the turtle and issuing commands to draw.

With this youonly need to use the cursors with [+]**P** to put the pen down and [-]**P** to put it up.

Pressing **o** or **O** lets you draw circles of varying sizes. You can alter the size with the [+]**h** or [-]**h** keys but it is the actually the other way round to what you would logically expect - [+] makes the circle smaller.

Other commands let you fill areas and save and print your handiwork. It's great as a simple introduction to Logo's drawing commands.



Yes, Logo can help you draw masterpieces such as this. Now you know how the Georges Pompidou Centre in Paris was designed.

M:=A:SETKEYS.COM [RETURN]. If you have an 8512 or an 8256, replace the disc in the A drive by side four of your systems discs. Type **M:=A:KEYS.DRL** [RETURN] followed by **M:=A:LOGO.COM** [RETURN]. Now replace the disc in the A drive by a blank, freshly formatted disc and type **A:=M:*.*** [RETURN].

Using the Logo programs. Switch on the PCW and at the A> type **SETKEYS KEYS.DRL** [RETURN] followed by **LOGO** [RETURN]. When the ? appears, replace the disc in the A drive by the Advantage disc (or a copy) and type **LOAD "AIRLINER** or whatever the name of the program you're using is. To run the program, then type **AIRLINER** [RETURN] or whatever the name is.

Important note: for all of these programs, you can only get printouts if you have a 8512 or 8256. CMORPH, PCWdraw, UDG and BIG are on the Fun With Graphics disc. The rest are on Logo Logic.

The program, referred to by evolution theorist Richard Dawkins in his books and TV programs, is supposed to show how arbitrary selection criteria can lead to progressively complicated life forms that more and more closely fit those criteria. If an animal that looks like a leaf stands a good chance of survival, then leaf-like bugs can develop very quickly, purely through spontaneous genetic mutation.

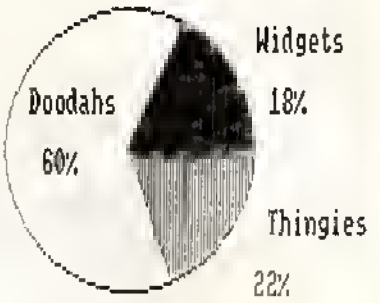
Unfortunately the program demonstrates nothing except that the programmer forgot to test for division by zero. This error dumps you out of the program after a few generations, just as things are beginning to get interesting, making the program very frustrating indeed.

You wonder if the Almighty has run up against the same problem with some celestial Mix C compiler. 2,000 million years of waiting and just as the lower primates are about to evolve into *Homo habilis*, all is scuppered by a Runtime Error 85, division by zero. "Genetic mutation My Foot! I suppose I'll have to do the lot myself in six days, as usual..."

Quick on the PCW draw

PCWdraw is a graphics program that can be useful for simple drawings – a pie chart or a circuit diagram.

Getting going: Switch on your PCW and insert your CP/M disc. At the A> prompt press [ALT]**P** (the PCW beeps). Insert side 2 of your Advantage disc and put some paper in the printer. Type **TYPE PCWDRAW.DOC.** When it's finished press [ALT]**P** again to stop the printer echoing everything on screen. The printout tells you how to get PCWdraw to work.



This simple pie-chart was created and printed out in 30 seconds using PCWdraw

Once its's up and running, the upper part of the screen is the drawing area. The dimensions are 720 x 96 pixels (dots to you) with the top left heing (0,0) and the bottom right (719,95).

You have the following commands:

2 (the one between the cursor keys, not the number 2) draws a line between the current cursor position and the last current position. The last current position is then updated to the current position.

So to draw a line you'll normally need to move to the required start point with **C**, then press **m**. Then move the end point and press **2**. To draw a polygon, move the cursor with the cursor keys and press **1** at each point.

m updates the last recorded cursor position to the current cursor position. This is equivalent to 'lifting the pen' and starting again at the current position.

cursor keys move the cursor one pixel

[ALT] plus cursors move 8 pixels

c updates the display

C moves the cursor to a given position

d all drawing is green-on-black

e erases lines instead of drawing

t toggle – drawing is green on black backgrounds and black on green

x clears the drawing window

p plots a point.

b draws a rectangle

B draws a filled rectangle

o draws a circle for use with the 'large' options of the print command.

O also draws a circle for the 'small' option on the Print command.

f fills an area with one of four patterns

w enters the text you type in next

s saves a drawing to a file on disk (9k).

r reads a file from disk

P prints drawing; five styles available

q quits the program

Better by design

Redesigning the screen font with UDG.BAS. This is an attempt to make the $ character into a Czechoslovakian r-hacek character (as used in Dvorak). Note how the basic screen letters have been changed using FENICE1.

A basic program called UDG.BAS lets you redesign the shapes of the screen letters. You can save your finished character sets as a .COM file. So, if you save your Czech screen set as CZECH.COM, then you can switch to [illegible] by typing [illegible] provided - FENICE2, FENICEB or FATTY. With the Advantage disc in the drive, type **FENICEB** [RETURN] at the A> and see what happens. These won't affect the printed letters and won't work in LocoScript.

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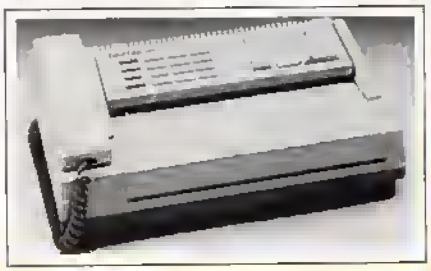

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Think Big!

Is your spreadsheet getting too large to handle? Karen Donaghay shows you how to cope with excessive amounts of data, using Cracker II.

Big spreadsheets can be a nuisance. Everything seems to slow down, or become more confusing, as soon as the spreadsheet becomes too big to fit on one screen. So, if your columns and rows are multiplying at an alarming speed, then this special tutorial can help you to keep things under control.

Certain tasks can become more problematic the larger your spreadsheet becomes. The most obvious difficulty is getting around. Simple tasks – finding an entry, or moving quickly to a different part of the spreadsheet – can soon become a laborious chore. Another annoyance, is the phenomenon of the disappearing headings. This will sound familiar to any seasoned Cracker user. Take a short scroll down the screen, and before you know it, your column headings have vanished from view. The sight of a screen, crammed full of figures, without a word of explanation, is not the most reassuring way to work. In fact, it is more than just an inconvenience: it allows errors to creep into your work – something to be avoided at all costs.

Finally, and this may sound silly, but have you ever tried rifling though a large computer printout? It is an experience vaguely reminiscient of a certain advert, where the puppy disappears into the distance, with an ever-increasing trail of paper behind it. Cutting your print-outs down to size is an easy process, but one which the manual barely touches upon.

Fortunately, all of these problems can be rectified, or at least minimized, just by knowing a few tricks of the trade. First, let's look at the most important improvement; keeping your headings, as a constant feature of your screen.

Divide and Rule

The partition command allows you to split up the spreadsheet into smaller pieces. Admittedly, this doesn't sound like earth-shattering stuff, but it is in fact one of the most useful commands in the book. It allows you to separate the headings from the main body of data, so that, no matter what area of the spreadsheet you are looking at, the headings can always be seen.

Take a look at our first screenshot. It contains the details of a company payroll. The problem is that there are 38 employees, and only 27 lines on the screen. As soon as you scroll downwards, the headings will disappear from view. Similiarly, there are far too many details for each employee to fit across the width of one screen.

The problem can clearly be seen in our first screenshot overleaf. In its original state, the bottom right-hand corner of the spreadsheet looks very confusing. The last columns actually contain the banking details of each employee, However, you would never guess this, just from looking at the screen. All you can see is a string of numbers, and there is no way of knowing immediately what they represent.

In our example, the columns do at least have some distinguishing characteristics. The bank sort code has only six figures, and the account number has eight. However, there is no easy way of telling which employee relates to which account number.

Making the break

A partition is, quite simple, a way of splitting up the spreadsheet into separate sections on the screen.

Let's take a look at this in action. First of all, you must decide where on the screen the partitions should be. In our example the obvious choice is to place one horizontal partition after line 3 and and a vertical partition after column 1. This sets aside the column and row headings in their entirety.

Type in the sequence **[P]artition [V]ertical.** This produces a horizontal line across the screen (see the second screenshot on this page). The Names column is 15 characters wide, so type in 15 and press **[RETURN]**. The same sequence applies to entering a horizontal partition. This time, type in the sequence **[P]artition [H]orizontal 3 [RETURN].** This produces a partition below the third row.

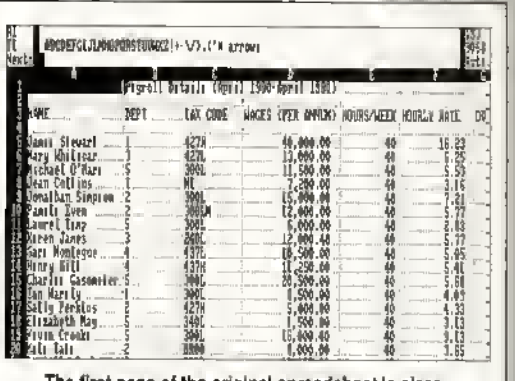
The result is shown in the third screenshot. There are four partitions. Each one displays a section of the spreadsheet. At the moment, the headings are duplicated, but don't let this deter you.

To move around in the main section, the cursor must first be moved into that part of the screen. Moving sideways, into the next section, is achieved by pressing the [/] key. To move up and down, press the **[EXTRA]** and **[1/2]** keys simultaneously. (This combination does, in fact, produce the \ character.)

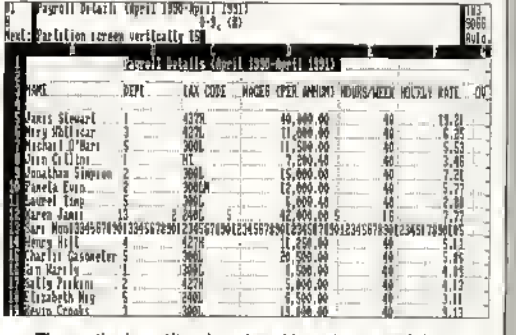
Once you are in the central section, you can move around as usual with the cursor keys. The bottom right hand corner of our payroll example can now be displayed on screen, with the welcome addition of the headings.

Have a look at our second screenshot on the facing page to see the result. The improvement in clarity is immediately obvious.

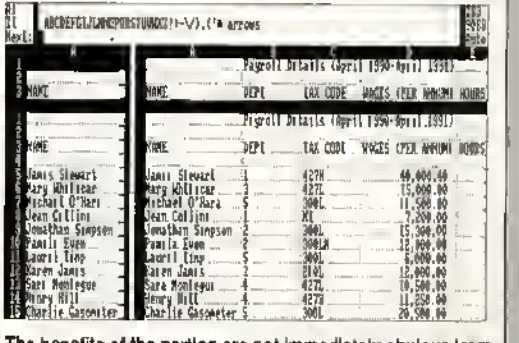
Bank details are easily recognisable, thanks to the column headings. They can also be related back to the relevant employee with ease.



The first page of the original spreadsheet is clear enough, thanks to the column and row headings



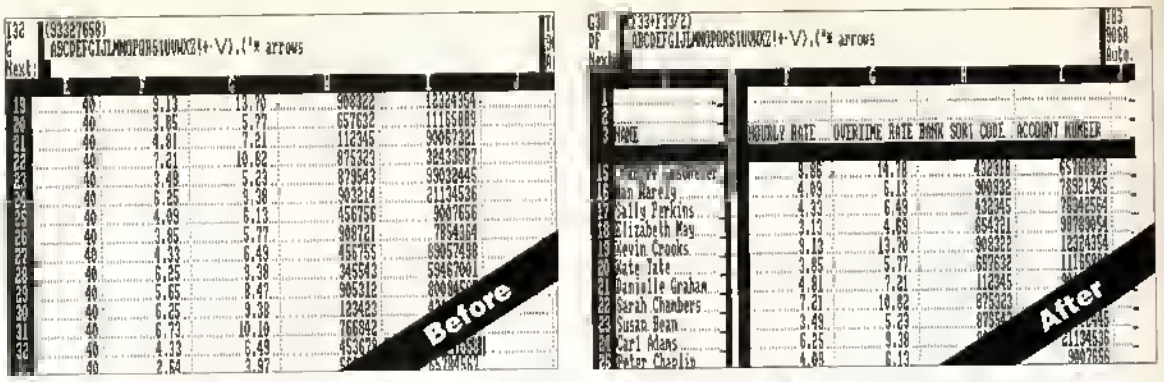
The vertical partiton is entered into the spreadsheet, with the aid of a guiding row of figures



The benefits of the partion are not immediately obvious from the first page, since they are already included

Window on the world

All partitions can be treated as mini-screens, and you can scroll within each partition in the usual fashion. For example, our heading partition could itself be scrolled down to display three lines anywhere within the spreadsheet.



This remote corner of the spreadsheet is tranformed by the use of partitions. The headings make it far easier to understand

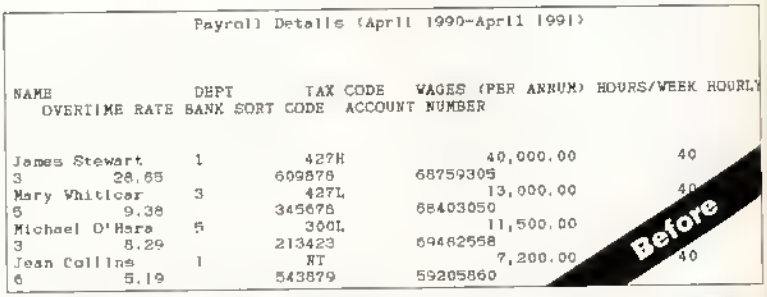
The small print

Smaller printouts are a boon when dealing with realms of information. Too many pages can create chaos on your desk and make any analysis of your spreadsheet highly inconvenient.

To cut the problem down to size, the text can be printed out in condensed style, taking up less space on the page. The manual only mentions this facility in passing, but it is, in fact, a simple case of using a special printer code. The code in question is sent to the printer by first typing in **[O]ut**, then pressing the keys **]ALT][O]** simultaneously. The **[RETURN]** key is pressed; then printing can take place as usual. The command **[C]opy [A]ll [P]rint** will print out the entire spreadsheet, in condensed text. To change back to ordinary text type in the sequence **[O]ut]ALT]]R] [RETURN]**.

We printed out our example spreadsheet, in both ordinary and condensed text. As you can see from the results, the condensed version is undoubtedly a great improvement.

Each line of the spreadsheet takes up only one line on the condensed printout and is, generally, far more compact. Not only is this version much easier to understand, but it also saves on paper.



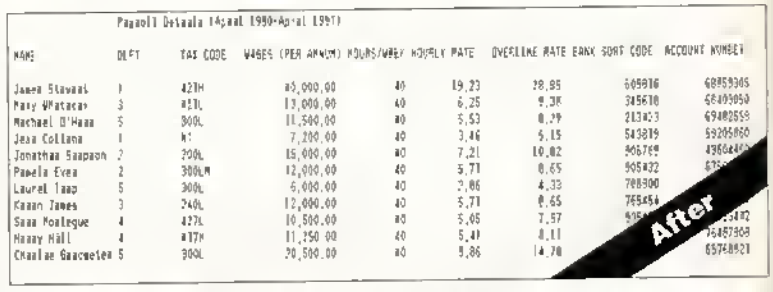
```
                    Payroll Details (April 1990-April 1991)

NAME                DEPT      TAX CODE   WAGES (PER ANNUM) HOURS/WEEK HOURLY
   OVERTIME RATE BANK SORT CODE  ACCOUNT NUMBER

James Stewart          1          427H          40,000.00          40
3              28.65          609876          68759305
Mary Whitlear          3          427L          13,000.00          40
5               9.38          345676          68403050
Michael O'Hara         5          300L          11,500.00          40
3               8.29          213423          69482558
Jean Collins           1           NT           7,200.00          40
6               5.19          543879          59205860
```

Before

Cracker printouts often fall short of the mark, in terms of presentation. Here the printout is badly spaced, and is too big to fit across the page. Instead it wraps round, creating a confusing page, that is a struggle to understand and looks very unprofessional. At this size, the only way to print out this spreadsheet, would be to split it in to two separate parts



```
                    Payroll Details (April 1990-April 1991)

NAME                DEPT      TAX CODE   WAGES (PER ANNUM) HOURS/WEEK HOURLY RATE  OVERTIME RATE BANK SORT CODE  ACCOUNT NUMBER
James Stewart          1          427H          40,000.00          40         19.23          28.85        609876  68759305
Mary Whitaker          3          427L          13,000.00          40          6.25           9.38        345676  68403050
Michael O'Hara         5          300L          11,500.00          40          5.53           8.29        213423  69482558
Jean Collins           1           NT           7,200.00          40          3.46           5.19        543879  59205860
Jonathan Sampson       2          200L          15,000.00          40          7.21          10.82        966789  43664455
Pamela Evans           2          300LM         12,000.00          40          5.77           8.65        905432  67[illegible]
Laurel Tapp            5          300L           6,000.00          40          2.88           4.33        788300  [illegible]
Kasan James            3          240L          12,000.00          40          5.77           8.65        765454  [illegible]
Sean Montague          4          427L          10,500.00          40          5.05           7.57        [illegible]  [illegible]
Nanny Hall             4          417H          11,250.00          40          5.41           8.11        [illegible]  76487808
Charlie Gascoigne      5          300L          20,500.00          40          9.86          14.78        [illegible]  65748821
```

After

Here, with the benefit of condensed print, a far more presentable picture emerges. The characters themselves are smaller and neater. Consequently, there is no wrapping on to the next line, and the result would not look out of place in any business portfolio

How far can you go?

So, how large can a spreadsheet be? Well, Cracker II allows up to 52 columns, and 255 lines. Cracker, as you know, labels the columns using upper case letters. When the 27th column is reached, Cracker reverts to the beginning of the alphabet, this time using lower case letters.

Smart moves

Getting around a large spreadsheet can be a time consuming business. The painstaking process of scrolling down the screen, can quickly wear down the patience, when your spreadsheet contains, say, 200 lines.

The simplest way of quickening the pace is to jump to a specified location. This is done by pressing **[J]ump** followed by a location, such as **C59**, and then pressing the **[RETURN]** key. Although this is a very handy option to have, it doesn't solve all of the potential problems.

What about when you want to find an entry by name, rather than by location? Imagine how long it could take to find the employee Joyce James, if there were 200 employees in our example spreadsheet, instead of only 38.

Fortunately, there is an alternative. The Get command allows you to find any text entry with ease. For example to locate Joyce James, press **[G]et /Joyce James/ [RETURN]** and the cursor whips through all of the possibilities, finally highlighting the words Joyce James.

There is one proviso. The Get command only searches from its current location onwards. To search through the whole spreadsheet, it must therefore be initially placed in the top left hand corner. You can also, if needs be, type in only part of the complete entry. The sequence **[G]et /James/ [RETURN]** would work equally well.

So, what about when there is more than one entry? For example, how would you search through the list of tax codes to find all employees with the code 300LM1? The quickest way of performing this search is as follows.

First, move to the top of the tax code column, with the command **[J]ump C1 [RETURN]**. Then type in **[G] /300LM1/]RETURN]** as usual. This finds the first occurrence of that particular tax code.

Finding subsequent occurrences is even quicker, since the actual details do not need to be entered. Just type in **[G]et // [RETURN]**. Cracker II assumes that you are still searching for the same string of characters, and finds the next entry of 300LM1 for you. This can be continued down the column.

The Get command is obviously an excellent time saver. It can be used to even greater advantage, by the simple addition of a few words. You can divide your spreadsheet up into sections, by adding keywords, such as **Part Two**, at strategic points throughout the spreadsheet.

These words can then act as markers. This allows you to move to another section of the spreadsheet, at any time, by simply entering **[G]et /Part Two/.** ●

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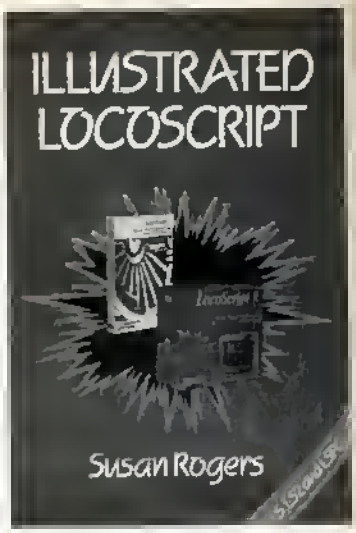


Illustrated LocoScript by Susan Rogers

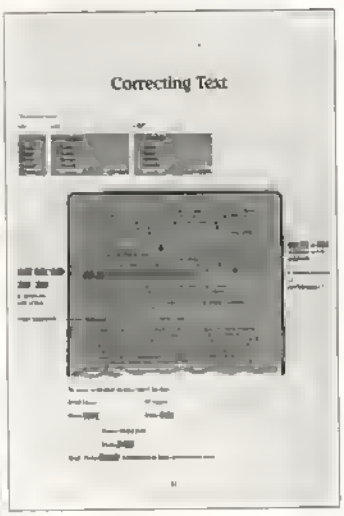
ILLUSTRATED LOCOSCRIPT by Susan Rogers

£10.95 | David Fulton Publishers
2 Barbon Close, London WC1N 3JX
ISBN 1-85346-128-8

Value Verdict = Excellent

The main criticism levelled at the manuals is usually that they are totally inpenetrable. The language suffers at the hands of the technicians who fail to address the needs of the novice. The main objective of authors trying to bring out a better product than the official offering is to present the information in good, clear English. The coup which Susan Rogers has pulled off with her new book, Illustrated LocoScript, is that good clear English is everywhere backed up by good, clear illustrations. The result is a fool-proof guide to the PCW's native word processor.

The format of the book is simple and clear to understand.



Illustrated and written instructions appear on the same page

There are a total of 22 chapters to get through, each of which consists of two pages. Every page carries an emboldened heading, so that you can open the book at any page and know exactly what process is being addressed. There is nothing more frustrating that having to wade through a few paragraphs of a manual before you know what area of the subject matter is under scrutiny.

The book includes the three versions of LocoScript currently available; LocoScript 1, LocoScript 2 and LocoScript PC. The inclusion of instructions for LocoScript PC might not seem relevant at first glance – but considering the crossover between PCW and PC users - often the distinction between home and work machines - the idea is a good one.

Illustrated LocoScript covers everything from Getting Started to templates, direct printing and mailshot management. Where the chapters are text-heavy – which is rarely the case – the page is divided up into sections for both PCW and PC users, with the relevant commands clearly listed. Where instructions are required on a heavily-illustrated page, the information takes the form of brief notes to the side, or at the foot of, the picture.

You should, on beginning, be sitting at your computer, with LocoScript installed, before you begin to go through the book. When you get started, you see the importance of following this advice. The illustrations used are not direct replicas of the actual screen (they're illustrations, not screenshots); other features are used to set the scene. For example, the [f] options are listed for each version of the program; in the section, Entering Text, you are told what should be at the top of the screen if you have followed the instructions correctly.

The guide by your side

The way in which the information is presented in this book gives you the feeling that someone is sitting by your side telling you how to do things. The emphasis is firmly on the practical; the instructions are brief but sufficient – press this key to do that, move to the end of the page like so. There is no time – or indeed place - for the why's in this kind of book. What you have is exclusive concentration on the how's, which is the quickest and most succesful path to mastery of any subject.

Each chapter contains a small section called Helpful Tips, which contains snippets of information which will help you to learn more about the task you are performing. For example, in the section on Correcting Text, there is a line or two about LocoScript's default status of Insert mode (the effect of existing text making way for new text as it is typed in). So, not only do you find out that this feature has a name, you also discover that you can reverse the effect, and the keypresses required to do so are listed for you. This kind of information will show you that you don't have to be a genius to get the most out of LocoScript, and it is likely to increase your understanding of the program's character.

The golden rules

Sections of text falling under emboldened 'Note' or 'Important' headings comprise further hints and reminders to ensure that you are doing everything according to the instructions.

At the end of the book, two pages are given over to the commands in each version of LocoScript, including the shortcuts. The page simply lists every key command, together with a brief description of the function it performs. Again, this is strictly a 'how to' rather than a 'why' section - not least because of the restrictions on space. The final page of the book looks at the PCW's special keys – that is, everything on the keyboard which is not a letter, a number or a punctuation mark. There is no distinction made here between machines, which would have been helpful, but certainly no stones are left unturned in the summary.

Illustrated LocoScript is a thorough, yet economical, whistle-stop tour of the three principal versions of LocoScript. If anyone had boasted that they could explain the complexities of mail merging or page layout with a diagram and a smattering of text, it could well have been difficult to believe. Susan Rogers' technique is a simple yet effective one; the quick way to learning is to present information with as much economy as possible. The task of understanding LocoScript then seems – and is – a very straightforward one. ●

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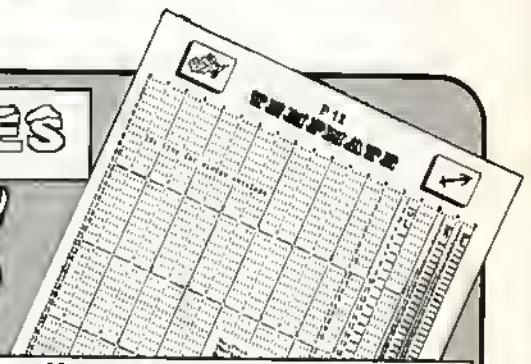

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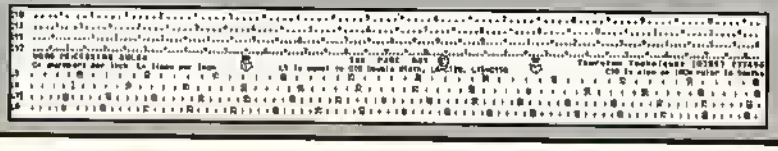

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Whether it's an intergalactic scuffle or heavy fire in the trenches, there's only one way to describe it - oh, what a wonderful war! Sophie Lankenau and Karen Donaghay review two new games to keep you occupied on Christmas afternoon

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If you need to be broken in gently to games software, there are few better ways to start than with Terracom. Despite the rather fierce sounding name, Terracom can best be described as a game of squash using small warships as rackets. Although that may not sound like the most gripping of challenges, one round of this game will go some way to explaining just how easy it is to be hooked on a pastime which is essentially, a great time-waster.

The game is loaded from CP/M by inserting the disc into the A drive of the machine and typing in **terracom** at the prompt. The opening screen reveals a series of options, **Start game** being the first of them. You are best advised to opt for the playing instructions before you begin – although these are not exactly the most lucid of directions.

Your task here is to destroy the outer blocks of the sky fortress. There are bonus points to be picked up!

One to one combat leaves you at the mercy of Kashodex and his powerful blasting weapon

Training ground

There is an opportunity to undergo some pre-game training – a useful introduction to the skills which are required for the real thing. The training consists of a fight between your module and that of the evil enemy Kashodex. You have to outwit him by sending the ball out of his reach – hence the squash analogy earlier. You both have a number of 'lives', which, when exhausted, leave you either the victor or the vanquished.

You move your module from left to right with the help of any two keys on the keyboard. Although the [Z] and [X] keys have already been made responsible for lateral movement, you can change them. This is a useful facility; touch typists might well prefer to use [F] and [J], the locations of the index fingers on the 'home keys' of the board. The spacebar is responsible for firing the ball itself.

The object of the game proper is to destroy Terracom, a sky-fortress constructed by an evil emperor. The first level has you attacking the outer blocks of the fortress, using your 'ball' to bash your way through its many layers. You have nine lives, all of which you should be grateful for; if the ball deflects from its target at an angle you cannot reach – a common occurrence for the inexperienced player - a life is lost.

There are bonuses, which materialise when you hit certain blocks twice. A life can be regained by striking the 'ball' block; 'fire' means that a whole line of blocks can be wiped out with one press of the spacebar, and 'wall' produces a barrier which you hide behind and off which the ball ricochets, destroying blocks without you having to field the return trip of the ball. The 'safe' block delivers you instantly to the next level of the game. Bonuses such as the wall and the 'glue' (which sticks the ball to the module giving you control over your aim) are effective until a different bonus block is struck.

On the level

Once you've destroyed those outer blocks, you have a one-to-one battle with a module sent by Kashodex. With five lives on each side, you repeat the game played in the training course.

If you win that, Kashodex starts to get a bit aggressive. The next level has you trying to destroy a line of blocks while dodging laser cannons and rockets. You have five lives, and you have to hit the line of blocks thirteen times to get through.

Once you get past Level 1, the task becomes more complicated. You have less lives and the more acute angles to contend wit

The next level takes you nearer to the core of the fortress, but the blocks are arranged more sparsely. The ball comes bounding back at you at all sorts of angles and speeds, and the task of completing this stage is a difficult one.

There seems to be an endless supply of 'levels' and 'phases' within those levels. However, the more you practise, the more adept you become at manoeuvring the module and anticipating the angles at which the ball is going to come back at you. So, if you keep getting stuck at the first level, don't despair; practice makes perfect, and you'll soon be moving on to greater challenges.

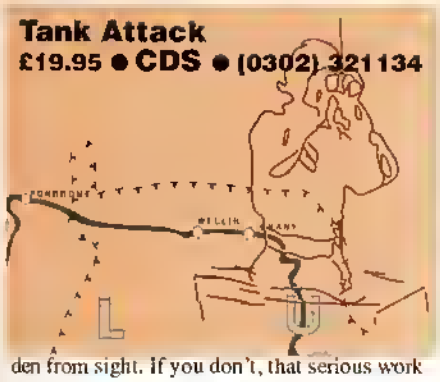
If you're wondering why on earth you will even want to keep practising, the answer is simple. Terracom is completely addictive. So, if you are in CP/M because you're planning to do some more serious work, do make sure that your copy of Terracom is hid-

Terracom

Pluses
- ▲ Excellent graphics
- ▲ Fast-moving
- ▲ Utterly addictive
- ▲ Fun, and easy to use

Minuses
- ▼ Not terribly original idea

Ease of use	4/5
Features	3/5
Challenge	4/5
Addictiveness	5/5
8000 Plus Value Verdict	17/20



den from sight. If you don't, that serious work will simply never get done.

Imagine the scene .. the country of Calderon is under attack. The defending general succumbs to a quick quake in his army regulation boots before pressing the [+] key with a firm and steady hand. The tanks open fire, but player number two, otherwise known as the General of Armenia, destroys the defending forces.

If you like your games to have more than a hint of realism then check out Tank Attack. This is armchair combat at its most inventive. The scene is set with meticulous detail with regular editions of the paper "War News".

The game can be played by up to four players and is, yes you've guessed it, a war game. The good news is that Mary Whitehouse can rest easy – there is no actual bloodshed in this game, and Rambo doesn't even get a walk-on part. What's more, all of the tanks are made of plastic.

Yes, that's right, plastic. In addition to the controlling program, a good old fashioned board plus four corps of plastic tanks are included as part of the setup. It is a combination that is sure to appeal to the Christmas PCWmarket, especially to those who enjoy games with a more traditional approach.

The aim of the game is, of course, to destroy enemy tanks and, ultimately, enemy headquarters. There are four countries, and they each have an individual territory on the board, complete with headquarters, mountains, rivers, villages and repair depots.

Even the cut and thrust of modern politics are incurporated into this game, in the form of alliances between countries. The country called Armania is an ally of Kalzaldis, and likewise Sarapan with Calderon. Allied countries can share resources and negotiate with each other. To play the game with only two people, either two countries can remain neutral or each player can control two allied countries.

Fire away

Strategy is crucial right from the start, when the tanks are placed on the board. Each country has one armoured division comprising eight tanks and four armoured cars. There are three types of tanks: main battle tanks (distinguished by two small plastic nodules on the back of the tank), medium tank units or light tank units (one or no nodules respectively). The armoured cars, however, come in two types, light and medium. A main battle tank has greater firing power than a medium tank and so on.

The program then proceeds to fill in the picture with the very first edition of "War News". Reading this newspaper provides the player with vital information: the general situation in a country can make all the difference to the success of an attack. Be warned though. This program knows all about wartime propaganda, and the political details may well be distorted.

After the news, the program moves on to the first player. Four small moving pictures (called icons) appear on the screen. The first shows tanks rolling into position, the next two portray a tank firing at either enemy troops or a tank firing at enemy headquarters. The last icon is used to end the current move, and is a set of moving arrows.

To begin with, the player can only move tanks: the number of steps the tanks can move on the board is decided by the program. They must be within range of an enemy tank (four squares on the board) before they can attack.

On the attack

The attacking tank size is entered into the computer, as is the size of the defending tank. At this point, the graphics can really take centre stage. Two tanks are shown. One of them rolls slowly foward. They pause, the guns move and take aim. Finally they open fire. Clouds of smoke billow from the unfortunate targets. The most powerful tank usually wins but not always. Low morale among the troops or bad weather conditions can be devastating for the over-ambitious general.

A battle report describes the extent of the damage. Tanks can be moved to the repair yards, (two squares situated within each country) unless they are totally destroyed. There is a catch though. Defending troops don't have this option, and a full repair yard can signal the scrapheap for a damaged tank. If so, the tank is removed from the board.

There are other factors to be taken into consideration. Obstacles such as rivers, mountains and villages can either slow down movement or prevent it altogether. There are also re-building yards, used to completely rebuild a destroyed tank.

After each player's move, the program either moves on to the next country, or displays "War News" on the screen. The finale of the game is when one player finally reaches and attacks the headquarters of an enemy country. Loss of central control means that particular country is out of the game.

All in all, this is a well thought out game. The combination of the old-style board game with imaginative computer graphics is a winning partnership. The board is colourful and of good quality, although, it has to be said that the pieces are rather small and could easily be mislaid.

The use of graphics is imaginative: "War News" is displayed on-screen as the front page of a newspaper and the moving icons were a nice touch.

The main selling point, however, is at the ideas level. This is certainly an intricate game. If the prospect of reading the accompanying booklet doesn't appeal, then this isn't the game for you. However, if you like complicated scenarios, capable of stirring the imagination as well as the grey matter, then Tank

The scene is set as the opposing tank rolls into position; this is the point of no return. Press the space bar and open fire!

Select your activity: do you want to fire at enemy tanks/headquarters or move your troops?

Here, another selection awaits you. You must choose your enemy and enter the range of fire

Tank attack

Pluses
- ▲ Realistic settings
- ▲ Good graphics
- ▲ Allows four players

Minuses
- ▼ Slow to develop
- ▼ Loser-friendly pieces

Ease of use	4/5
Features	5/5
Challenge	4/5
Addictiveness	3/5
8000 Plus Value Verdict	16/20

Catching Code

In which Tim Smith and his PCW stare corruption squarely in the face and aren't the slightest bit worried ...

If I get told this once a week, I get told it five times; computer viruses are here to stay. Computer viruses are basically small pieces of 'code' (programming language) which are planted by small-minded idiots in order to ruin other people's computing lives.

Having worked with every computer you could imagine, from super-systems which carry out millions of instructions per minute (MIPS) to zappy games machines which show 4,096 colours on screen, it is clear that with the growth of the legitimate industry, the illegitimate is just about managing to match it step for step.

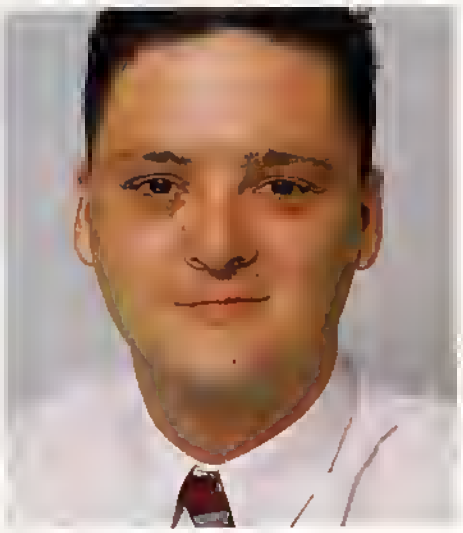
The reasoning behind a virus is contorted, wholly evil and entirely pointless. In fact it is unreasonable. The person who works all night, for several weeks running, in order to create a digital infection - and it does take that long to construct even a basic virus - has no constructive plan. It is more likely that they merely wish to show off. They are like small children who have discovered crayons, want to draw something in order to impress the grown-ups but are too lazy to be creative, so just scribble circles - or worse. While the brat will scrawl on a wall, the virus programmer will attempt to wreak havoc on other peoples' systems.

But what has this got to do with us PCW owners? So far in the history of the machine, absolutely nothing. That's a pretty big zero. Not one virus. Rumours do the rounds every so often, such as the one which was relayed to me in a bar on Birmingham New Street station a year ago. The person I was talking to thought of himself as an 'industry source' when, in fact, he was as loopy as a major one-way system - or so it transpired. He explained to me that he owned an upgraded 8256 with two drives at his office and standard 8512 at home. He also dabbled in comms. This last attribute made his story almost feasible as bulletin board systems (BBSs) can be carriers of infections. He crouched over his half-pint, beckoned me closer and began to explain that he had discovered a virus.

The fool on the hill

The nasty, he had, in his skill (or rather dotage), identified as lurking in LocoScript of all places. Now, had this been the case, is it undoubtedly true that Howard Fisher and all the crew at Locomotive software would have withdrawn the product and that it would have been front page news in *8000 Plus*. Let me tell you what this fool thought was a virus.

All his LocoScript files were being changed into garbage. I listened intently and even considered buying him another half. What was happening, he explained, was that he would use LocoScript at work because he could fit headers and footers and generally make it look as if his



Tim Smith: "The reasoning behind a virus is contorted, wholly evil and entirely pointless"

company was a professional affair. But, at home, he had started to use Protext. The version of Protext he was using was a copy, hence illegal, which he had obtained from a friend of his. Well, he had started to take his LocoScript files home to work on. He loaded his files into Protext and all that came up on screen was ... garbage! He had been attacked by a virus and would, and I quote, "Rip the head off the b*****d who did it." It took one simple question to work out that the guy knew less about viruses, PCWs and normal life than a minor character from a Franz Kafka novel. I asked "Are you turning your LocoScript files into ASCII format before putting them into Protext?"

"Er... no I thought the two systems were compatible" At least he didn't make the awful Arthur ASCII pun.

"There you go then, mate, no problem. Sorry to leave you, but I have to go to my bank manager's funeral; he's not been well recently," I muttered while making a hasty exit in fits of laughter.

Unclean! Unclean!

There have been other PCW virus rumours over the years, such as the one which inverted the screen; it turned out to be PALETTE.COM. Then there was the one which wiped data; this turned out to be someone looking for their files on the wrong side of an unlabelled double-sided disc. None of the fish tales have been true - and nor are they ever likely to be.

There are two good reasons for this. Firstly, the kind of people who use PCWs are not the kind who create viruses. I know this might sound like a vast generalisation, but after two years on *8000 Plus*, hundreds of reader calls, thousands of letters and numerous meetings with users, I have never met a single person who sees the slightest point in creating a virus.

Secondly, the PCW is not the kind of machine which can support a virus.

Now that you've relaxed a little, it's about time to list a few digital diseases which affect other machines. After reading this, you can treat your machine to a clean or a new disc and continue using it for the next few decades. Here we go... One particularly vicious strain makes use of modems and comms software. It hangs around for a while and then, starting at a specific date and until caught, it calls the speaking clock in Cyprus and builds up one hell of a phone bill. But not on the PCW.

Garbage in, garbage out

Another virus is so mindbendingly useless that all it does is to reproduce files full of garbage which will fill up a hard disc over a short period of time. But not on the PCW.

There are viruses which print messages on screen such as "Legalise cannabis now" and then commit micro-suicide. There are those which come in two parts like epoxy glues. Neither half is dangerous on its own, but when co-joined, they will run wild, copying themselves from disc to disc and wiping data. But not on the PCW.

As computing moves into early adolescence, the pranks of the virus creators become equally deliquent. There are now viruses which can protect themselves by changing their forms in order to avoid detection by the numerous protection devices available. These are called self-encrypting viruses or even armoured viruses and they use their own code to mask themselves. You won't find anything like this on an 8256, 8512 or 9512. Basically, the PCW user works in one enclave of computing which is utilitarian (we spreadsheet, we write, we keep databases, occasionally we play games), clubby and sociable. You will have far more luck finding two PCW users giving each other tips on Micro Design or The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy than attempting to warp each others' drives.

In terms of the history of computing, the PCW world is more akin to the dreams of early developers such as Alan Turing or even hi-tech whizz kids such as Steve Jobs (the man who started Apple Macintosh) than to the modern ethic of 'power computing'; all they wanted was a community of computers working for people. At the end of the day, viruses and stupid rumour-mongering go beyond simply showing off and enter the realms of serious crime; quite definitely not something you'd encounter in the world of the PCW. ●

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THE WORD PRE-PROCESSOR

● FOREWORD is the new program from Software Imperative, the people who brought you FLIPPER. It's a tool for writers: not just authors (though they'll certainly want a copy) but letter writers, report writers, sermon writers – in fact, anyone who works with words.

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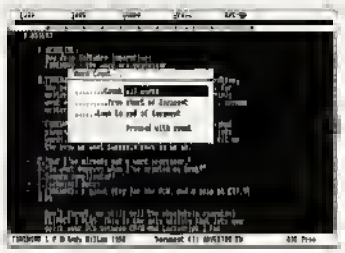
● A carefully designed menu system makes FOREWORD easy to learn and use.

"BUT I'VE ALREADY GOT A WORD PROCESSOR."

FOREWORD isn't a word processor, nor is it intended to replace one. Word processors are tools for presenting text on paper, and most of them do this very well. FOREWORD is designed for the stage before this, the creative stage of writing where your ideas are still too vague or unstructured for normal word processing. That's why we call it a "word pre-processor".

FOREWORD is specially designed to stop you getting bogged down in detail as your document grows. With a word processor, as soon as your text takes up more than a screenful you start losing that all-important "big picture" – the overview of your work that's the key to good writing. FOREWORD's powerful "Hide" and "Show" functions give you back that overview. Even when you've typed in thousands of words you can still get a clear picture of your piece at the press of a key, collapsing the on-screen document down to its bare bones.



● Writing for print? Then you'll appreciate FOREWORD'S fast, accurate word counter.

FOREWORD also shuffles ideas around far better than a WP can. The "Move" function lets you pick up an idea and move it wherever you like within the document, regardless of how much text the idea comes with. There's no block-marking involved: whether it's one sentence or a hundred, you can pick an idea up or put it down again with a single keypress.

"SO WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I'VE CREATED MY TEXT?"

Because FOREWORD doesn't deal with typefaces or layouts, you'll need to get your finished text into a word processor or DTP package before you can present it attractively on paper. Normally, transferring data from one program to another is a fiddly, time-consuming business, but FOREWORD makes the task quick and easy.

For one thing, there's no need to quit FOREWORD to use your word processor. FOREWORD is a pop-up program: it can share memory with Locoscript 2 or CP/M, hiding "in the background" until you summon it. Just hit SHIFT-ALT-EXTRA and in 1 second you'll be looking at the FOREWORD editing screen. Hit SHIFT-ALT-EXTRA again and 1 second later you'll be back in CP/M or Locoscript 2, exactly where you left off.

Also, you don't have to save ASCII files in FOREWORD and import them into your word processor. FOREWORD's "Transfer" function can force your text directly into a word processor document as if you were typing the words yourself. (Of course, if you find Transfer's 150-200 words per minute a little slow, FOREWORD is quite happy to save your text as ASCII: it supports two different kinds, plus a special format for WordStar and NewWord users.)

SOUNDS COMPLICATED?

Don't worry: FOREWORD has a carefully designed menu system you'll be able to master in minutes. What's more, FOREWORD supports all those special-purpose keys you're used to, like UNIT/PARA, WORD/CHAR and LINE/EOL. CUT and COPY trigger lightning-fast block operations, EXCH/FIND gives you speedy search and replace functions, and PTR summons the Printer menu. (We couldn't find anything for the RELAY key to do: FOREWORD reformats its paragraphs automatically, as fast as you can alter them.)

FOREWORD's even easy to install: it comes on a self-booting disk you can back-up and use immediately. No need to copy files or fiddle with PROFILE.SUBs – just switch the machine on, pop FOREWORD in the drive and it'll load automatically.

VITAL STATISTICS:

FOREWORD has a fast, accurate word-counter, can edit up to eight documents at once, and has no maximum file size. It takes a minimum of 112K of RAM, and a maximum of 2 Mbytes – the most a PCW can be fitted with.

FOREWORD is fully compatible with Locoscript v2.16 onwards (including LocoSpell, LocoFile etc), and with all legal CP/M programs. To run FOREWORD you'll need a PCW with at least 512K of memory. FOREWORD supports all SCA and Isenstein memory add-ons. For use with FLIPPER 2 PLUS, and with non-legal CP/M programs like Mini Office and Microdesign II, extra memory is essential. (FOREWORD won't work with earlier versions of FLIPPER, but you can upgrade these for free if you order FOREWORD at the same time.)

FOREWORD DOES NOT SUPPORT:

- File passwords and file time/date stamping;
- Foreign-language keyboards;
- Hard drives;
- Printers on external serial/parallel interfaces (though the 9512's built-in parallel port is fine);
- Single-density or single-sided B: drives (though 720K 5¼" or 3½" drives are okay).

DON'T FORGET:

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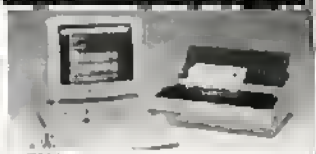

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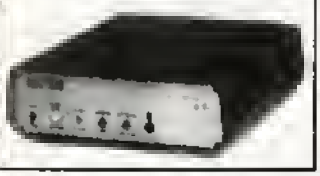

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The Professionals

You will never get a second chance to make a first impression; Alec Rae shows you how to give the public face of your company a competitive edge

There is one thing that new PCW owners discover very quickly. It pays dividends to, at least, *look* professional. They discover this the first time they send out a letter well-printed, well-laid out and without a single correction in evidence. For some reason, people seem to take that kind of letter more seriously than something written in crayon on a flattened out Benson and Hedges packet. But, of course, the stakes are rising all the time. As PCW (and other computer) owners become more sophisticated in their use of their machines, standards inevitably rise. Stand still for a moment and you run the risk of being left behind.

Last month we looked at ways of using Micro Design 2 to design a logo to represent your business or club. However, once you have this masterpiece of graphic design on disc, you still have to decide how to use it to the best advantage.

The first thing to look at is your stationery. Your letter heads, compliment slips, invoices and receipts will all be seen by your customers far more often than your face. If nothing else, it is an effective form of subliminal advertising if customers immediately think of your company every time they see any of the documents that you have sent out.

Putting on the style

The logo, not surprisingly, plays a pretty vital part here. But the style of text and the layout of the document will play an important, if much more subtle role, in tying together the whole of the document.

This is where Micro Design comes into its own. Its handling of text is impressive and the range of fonts available is wide enough to cater for virtually every need.

Obviously you have to decide, at the outset, how far you want to take things. The ideal would be to use Micro Design 2 for all your word processing so that you could take advantage of the blend of text and graphics that it allows. A connection could be created between the font used for the address and the body text. Varying type sizes could be used to create the differences needed, while still giving an overall consistency in appearance.

This is perhaps not totally practical. Most people are more comfortable with their favourite word processor. To create a document in LocoScript and then load it into Micro Design would be time consuming and complicated.

But this doesn't mean that this ideal should be completely forgotten about. You may want to send out a standard sales letter to prospective customers or a standard letter of welcome to new club members. These could quite easily be kept as a matrix in MicroDesign and adapted to suit each time it was required. And remember this approach to design can help you all the way through the process of creating your literature. Obviously you may want to have headed paper professionally printed.

If you have access to a laser printer or a 24 pin printer, you could actually produce a quality of output good enough to be used as art work for the printer. If not, you can still play about with elements of your headed paper or compliment slips, trying out different arrangements of the components. The big advantage of desktop publishing is that you can try out every arrangement possible and all it will cost you will be your time and a few hundred sheets of paper.

Most people know immediately if they think something looks right. They can see if the text is the right size or the logos in the wrong place once it's on paper in front of them. It also means that when you get your stationery you know that you will be happy with the layout.

Get professional help

If you get your headed paper professionally printed, it would still be worthwhile choosing a font that you can reproduce on Micro Design. As well as the 25 fonts that comes with the program, the company also provide a couple of discs of extra fonts – each with more than 20 new designs – so there is plenty to choose from.

Not that all of these would be suitable. Most dynamic, young companies would probably want to steer clear of Medieaval, and, with the exception of Greek companies, most people will probably want to leave the Greek Helvetica alone.

And it may also mean opting for one of the better known faces (Times or Helvetica). There are probably only a few professional printers who could (or would want to) match Brush.

First you need to decide whether you are going to use the same face for the address and headings as you use for the text. This would certainly limit you to one of the more sensible faces. A whole sales letter in Wobbly or Scribble could be a little hard to take.

This does not mean that you have to give up all artistic pretensions. Micro Design's ability to redesign letters means that you could perhaps adapt a few letters to be more distinctive - say the capitals of your company name - while still retaining the overall continuity of the font design. This is an aspect that we will explore later in the series.

Perhaps the major trade-off in choosing any font is between aesthetics and readability. There is no point in choosing the most artistic font if no-one can read your address.

On the other hand, there are some businesses, especially anything that is connected with arts and crafts, where a solid dependable letter heading in Times just wouldn't suit.

DIY design concepts

One simple way of ensuring an overall design concept is to use the same design and adapt it for all your stationery. One simple way of achieving this is to base everything on your letter head.

It is remarkably simple to adapt it for invoices, statements and delivery notes. Often just typing in 'Invoice' at the top of the page will suffice as an imaginative conversion.

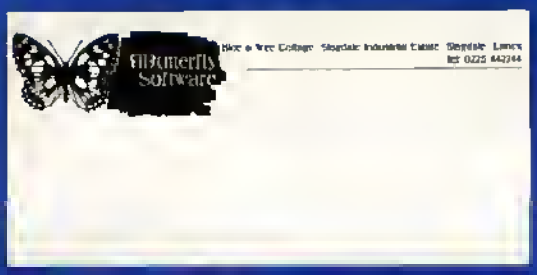
If the text on your headed paper is confined the top of the page it is often enough just to cut off this area, type in 'With compliments' in a suitable script font (One sensible use for a face like Calligrapha, for instance) and, hey presto, your compliment slips are ready.

However it is dangerous to limit yourself too much at this stage. Many designers are now trying to get away from letter heads with all the text crammed into the top three inches.

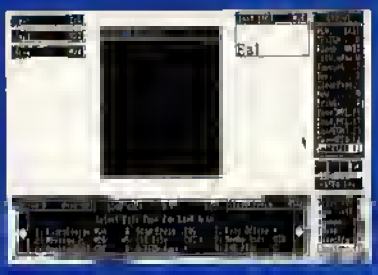
With clever computers that can consistently set margins correctly, you can make imaginative use of the sides and the bottom of the paper to good effect. ➤

Tools of the trade

Micro Design II costs £59.95 and is available from Creative Technology ('phone number 0889 567160), 10 Park Street, Uttoxeter, Staffordshire ST14 7AG.



1 Begin with a letterhead



2 Then size the logo

3 Choose your typeface

1 A good place to start is obviously your headed paper. This doesn't just tell your customer your address and telephone number. It says a great deal about your company and how you approach your business. Is your company an old-fashioned, no-nonsense kind of firm, a high-powered modern business or an artistically-biased, design or craft-based operation? All these would require a different approach. You also need to decide what elements you want on your letter head. Your address and telephone number would obviously be a good start. But you may also want your VAT number, a list of your directors, addresses of sales offices, a list of the products you sell and perhaps even a mission statement – that little phrase that encapsulates your approach to your business. Then decide on priorities. How prominent should each element be? You don't have to make final decisions but it's worthwhile giving such things a little thought before you start.

2 Having spent all last month designing your logo, you'd better use it. While the position of the logo is pretty vital, the size of it is probably even more important. You don't really want it taking up the whole of your page. But, at the same time, if it is at all complicated, important detail may be lost if you use it too small.

Files can be loaded in the same size, half-size and double-size. Try them all to see what looks best. Because space is limited in the Design screen (often a double size .CUT file will be too big to place here) you may want to place it, instead, in the Layout screen.

Load the file as if you were placing an area [F1]. But at the point where the program is going to give you a list of all area files (*.MDA), you press [f1] Areatype and choose the CUT option. This will show you all the cut files available on the disc. Pick the one you want, click on the size you want (right hand corner) and place it in the normal way.

3 Choosing the typeface will obviously be one of the more time-consuming exercises. If you buy the two extra font discs, you have more than 60 differnt fonts and sizes to consider.

Loading fonts is easy. While you are in the Layout screen, you simply press [F3] Loadfont.

As with loading a CUT file, the program will let you see what font files are on a disc in any disc drive you choose, by simply pressing [RETURN] (*.FNT files). Click on to the font that you want and press [RETURN] and the font is loaded. You can see what the current font looks like at the top right hand side of the screen, next to the layout menu.

This time we have picked the RONDO.FNT – a nicely rounded, middle-of-the-road font that comes in the Extra Fonts disc. This is different enough to be eye-catching while still being business-like and readable.

4 Making small improvements

5 Entering the text

6 And now for the rest

4 An easy way to liven up text is to modify the letters. Obviously you don't want to do a complete set. There are plenty of good fonts available. But perhaps a few letters could be improved.

Press [EXIT] and click on the FONTS option. You will see a tiny but perfectly formed character set near the bottom of the screen. Click on the letter B, EDIT and the tick. This should load the letter B in the grid.

For this trick, we want to both reverse it and turn it upside down, so click on Reflect...X and Reflect...Y in the menu. You have to move the margin line by clicking on the right hand Margin arrow.

Click on a letter in small font that you don't use – the dollar sign is useful. Click on Keep and the tick sign. Now instead of typing a dollar sign you will produce a reversed, upside down B.

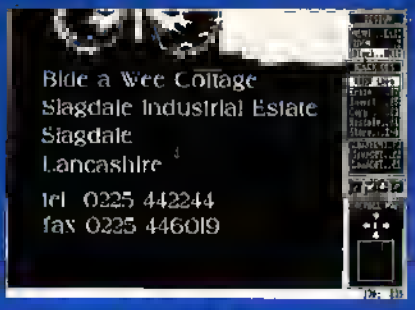
5 Click on B again, turn in upside down with Reflect...Y and save it to %. If you were going to use these characters regularly you could save the font to disc. Don't save it over the proper font file. By calling it MYFONT.MDF or something equally imaginative you can load these special characters like a normal font file.

Press [EXIT] and pick DESIGN. Using the cursor arrows (click on the arrow pointing directly down from the main menu box and then click on the arrow you want) get the screen to where you have loaded your logo.

We have a nice black area to fill with text. Remember Micro Design 2 automatically reverses everything so typing on black comes out white. Click on WRITE, and place the text cursor on the black space. By keying in $ and % you get a couple of letters that could be mistaken, on a dark night, for a butterfly.

6 Now for the rest of the text. You will want this to be smaller than the company name text. Scaling and spacing can be adjusted so there is no excuse for not getting things to fit right.

While you are in WRITE mode there is a box displayed showing the words SCALING and SPACING. Click on SCALING and a box appears on the first line of the lower box – Character Height. By clicking on the arrows at either end of the scale you can increase or decrease the height of the letters. The second line carries out the same function for the width of the letter. If you greatly decrease the height of a font, you usually will want to reduce the width by a similar amount - unless you want particularly distorted letters, of course. Fill in the address and telephone number where you think it looks best. This time we just typed it in right across the top of the page.



7 A little experimenting

8 Dividing off the address

9 Save it!

7 You can flip back to the Layout screen to get an overall view of how this looks. Back in the Design screen you can try out variations. You can pick up blocks of text or graphics and move them about. Choose the Block...UNIT option and a box appears on screen. Place this over the area you want to move and click the right hand button to allow you to adjust the size.

Once you have everything neatly surrounded choose F3 Copy from the menu and wherever you click next, the box will immediately move to that spot. If you want to move it a long way you may have to move the box as far as you can in the screen and then use the cursor arrows to move the screen area.

You could have to do this several times in Design mode or you could just flick over to Layout and do it in one expansive gesture.

8 Remember that you have all the graphics features available. In this case it looked better - and much cleaner - to divide the address off from the rest of the page with a simple line.

Click on the spot you have chosen for one end of your line. This will place a small cursor cross there. Pick the LINE option from the menu and then click on the other end of the line.

The line will appear between these two points. This will often not be as perfectly lined up as you would want. By holding down the left mouse button you can adjust the line until you are happy with it. If you never get happy with it, click on the cross sign and start again.

Once you are happy with the line, click on the tick and it is there permanently. You could also use boxes or even circles to highlight parts of your design in the same way.

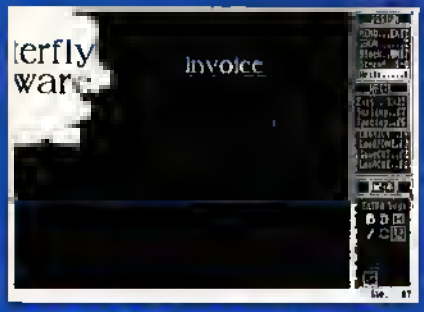
9 Once you have a layout that you are happy with, save it immediately. To do this you want to be in the Layout Screen. You press [f2] SaveAREA and one of those familiar adjustable boxes appears.

Place the box by clicking on the cursor roughly in the middle of your design and then click on the right hand mouse button. This changes the cursor to allow you to 'drag' the corners of the box into place.

If, like this one, your design goes across the top of the page, mark out a block that covers the whole width of the paper. At the very least, extend your box to the top left hand corner of the paper.

This makes the saved file much easier to place when you reload and makes sure that you always get a page with all the elements in the right place.

Use a name you will remember - LETTER.MDA or INVOICE.MDA.



10 Matching accessories?

11 Don't overdo it
12 And stick to it

10 You can now go on to design each piece of literature in turn. Letterheads, compliment slips, invoices, statements, delivery notes or order forms - anything you want. Just pick the most suitable layout of the elements and add in all the text that doesn't change. Some amendments are quite easy. If you are quite satisfied with your invoice simply erase the word 'Invoice' and insert 'Statement'. Save this as STAT.MDA or something suitable. Big firms often try to make obvious differences between invoices and statements - so that when you get a statement you realise that they are getting impatient for their money. Although there might be some design changes, it is usually achieved by changes in the colours used in the design (bright red seems a popular colour for statements). You could always try using a different coloured paper or printer ribbon.

11 It is a good idea to keep the number of fonts you use to a basic minimum. You can always tell the person who has just got a new DTP package by the fact that they have six fonts on the same page and always insist on using an Old English face.

However there are times when it does make sense to use a different type face. One obvious example is the compliment slip. Nobody ever really reads the words 'With Compliments' so you can use any fancy script face you want (Here we used the Scribble face from the Extra Fonts Disc 2 - the Revenge). You could also try to persuade yourself that it personalises it a bit, but no-one will believe you. Also remember with compliment slips to leave yourself plenty of open white space. There are more short letters scribbled on compliment slips than have ever been typed on headed paper.

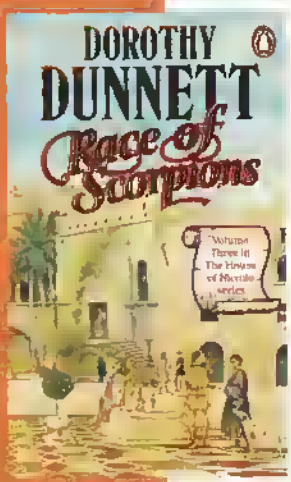
12 Just as important as deciding on a layout for your letterhead, is working out a style for the layout of each letter. How far down the page should you start? Where do you put the date? Do you indent paragraphs? Do you put a line between paragraphs - dozens of tiny details that all make up the complete design package.

Having made these decisions, write them all down on a style sheet (with a few examples of how it's done). Then when you get someone new doing your word processing, you don't need to stand over their shoulder for the first three weeks saying "No, we put the address about three centimetres to the left of that." This is as important for invoices etc, where you want to be sure that you have all the correct information in the right places. It makes doing the books a thousand times easier.

History in the Making

Historical novel-writing? No sweat! Or is it? Nick Vandome talks to two successful authors about the pleasures and pitfalls of this particular genre

Ever since Walter Scott wrote *Waverley*, looking back at the Jacobite Rebellion of 1745, the historical novel has grown steadily in popularity; today, bookshelves are filled with historical fiction in one form or another. It can be historical romance in the style of Philippa Gregory's *Wideacre*, for example, novels that document social changes over a specific period in history – like R. F. Delderfield's *A Horseman Riding By*. It can be novels based on actual historical events or figures – take the *Robert the Bruce* trilogy by Nigel Tranter.



Keep an eye out for these two when you next go browsing: Palliser's *The Quincunx* and Dunnett's *Race of Scorpions*

But historical fiction is very hard work to produce. Two authors who have overcome the hurdles involved are Charles Palliser and Dorothy Dunnett; although they write very different types of historical fiction, they both began for a similar reason – there were no more books of the type they liked to read; so they decided to write more themselves. In Dunnett's case, this is historical romance sagas set in the 16th Century. Her most famous example of this is the Lymond series of novels which features a soldier of fortune's escapades in 16th Century France, Russia, Turkey and Scotland.

Palliser has recently written the widely acclaimed *The Quincunx*, his reaction to the lack of new books by his favourite authors, Charles Dickens and Wilkie Collins. It is set in the Victorian era and shows the effect a mysterious document has on one man, John Huffam, and the people around him. As well as working in different periods, both writers employ different approaches to the task of writing about the past. Dunnett writes her stories in a series of six or eight books, each standing on its own but contributing to the overall saga. She pays great attention to the detail of the period and is an historical writer in the traditional sense; she tells a story that takes places in the past.

Palliser is more concerned with the *form* of the historical novel. "Traditionally, the historical novel imposes a present-day perspective on an earlier historical period so that the two periods are brought now and then into an interesting collision. What I was trying to do was a little more unusual; I would 'think' myself back to the Victorian period and write as if I was actually there. I think that it is important to imagine yourself in the period about which you are writing.

"What I tried to do was use the literary conventions of the Victorian period but turn them against themselves. I wanted it both ways; to write a novel which would work in Victorian terms, which would have a strong narrative and melodrama but not shy away from big emotional scenes. I also wanted it to span a wide spectrum of society. I also wanted to suggest that the Victorian novel was not telling the truth about its own society."

Ambitious intentions, but that is one thing about historical fiction – you have to think big and then be prepared to do the work to carry out your ideas.

Far and wide

Of all types of writing, historical fiction is probably the one that relies most heavily on research; after finding out all the facts, the writing itself may seem like a positive rest. Because of this, it is vital that you choose a period or historical figure in which you are interested to begin with. Both Dunnett and Palliser admit to being addicted to the process of research, but they both go about it rather differently. Dunnett likes to gain as much experience of the places and events that she is writing about and this results in very detailed, 'hands-on' research.

"For one book I went to Cyprus because I had to describe one great siege and several battles. Also, my central character was involved in the management of the sugar crop, which was once one of the most valuable commodities in the world. I had to see the places where it was grown and where it was refined and also visit the castles and fortifications for the battle scenes.

I do this wherever I set major scenes because working to this kind of detail I don't think you can be fresh and convincing without actually experiencing the climate, the sounds and smells and the looks of a location. I am a member of just about every library you can think of and I haunt galleries and museums everywhere; but it is abroad you find the foreign books and period maps that make all the difference." It may not be financially viable for every writer to jet off to far flung places of the world just to check a few facts but it does show that you should choose a period and area that you know you will be able to research properly.

Skeletons in the cupboard

For *The Quincunx* Palliser had a problem in that he was trying to write about the seamier side of Victorian life; this called for much scouring of libraries and old records: "I was trying to research areas about which Victorian society was most reticent. We don't know very much about working class life or prostitution; we don't know about madhouses. I deliberately set out to look into a whole lot of areas that are actually to some extent a blank; I found it very difficult. My method was to make big sweeps over the period to pick up a lot of very basic things so that I wouldn't make very elementary mistakes. Then I started writing and went back and read up in much more detail. For instance, once I realised I was going to be using a madhouse, I then read three or four books about Victorian madhouses. So trying to get the basic groundwork laid was a to and fro process – much easier, I would imagine, than for a remoter period where it becomes easier to structure the plot on some absolutely crucial assumption that is actually wrong."

While doing his research for *The Quincunx* Palliser soon discovered that an interest in the historical period can be a drawback as well as an advantage. "Half the trouble with research for historical fiction is stopping yourself. You have a difficult balance between looking for things you need to find and always being open to finding something you hadn't expected to find."

Use your imagination

He fell foul of this when he was researching information on grave robbers and found a small diary with numerous enigmatic entries about the activities of the so-called resurrectionists. He was so taken with the mystery of it all, that he spent several months investigating this whole area and ended

up with a wealth of information for his own use but no further on with his novel. This is a problem that has to be watched closely: research should not be used just for the sake of it; it must enhance the plot.

Of course not all information in historical novels has to be based entirely on factual research and there is still plenty of scope to let your imagination run riot in the period of your choosing. Palliser did this in his fascinating description of the London sewers of the Victorian times.

"The passages about the sewers come out of about a page of documentation from the period, and also a brief description of someone going down a sewer. People have assumed that it is all historically accurate but, in reality, I just got my imagination to work on a few cryptic hints. If it had all been describe, I wouldn't have been intrigued and there wouldn't have been much for me to do. But people make that assumption; an example of this was a conversation I had with the features editor of *The Evening Standard* who asked me to write a feature on the London sewers. He never actually asked if I had been into the sewers, but just assumed that I had an intimate knowledge of them. The truth is I have never been down a sewer in my entire life."

Grand schemes

This is one of the side-effects of researching for historical fiction; you may become an expert in an area of non-fiction that you could later put to your literary advantage. Dorothy Dunnett found this when she was researching a novel on Macbeth. She became so enthralled with the subject (and for the record Macbeth was actually one of the fairest and most benign kings in history) that she is now considering writing a non-fiction book about this period.

Once all the research has been done, the writing can begin. Dorothy Dunnett has it down to a fine art and does her writing in a studio at the bottom of her garden, surrounded by piles of books, maps and dolls dressed in period costume. "I lay my designs before I begin. My device is a single grand scheme, containing many interlocked characters, most of them historical, divided into a series of eight separate books, each of which should be quite satisfying to read on its own. But through it all runs a central mystery, a central story which involves a core of about twenty people. We get to know them very well before the period ends. When they are playing their part, we see them almost daily and they must be interesting, they must be well thought out, they must be properly motivated. The central figure is on the stage all the time so it is even more essential to create someone complex and credible, but still unpredictable, who will react and change through each book. I was once asked why my central character is always a man and the answer is that if you want to deal with wide issues, or just a good fight, you are shackled by history. I couldn't create a fictitious woman who could go where the central male characters go, but I can create a number of powerful females who alter events from behind the scenes, which is what women certainly did.

"I think people are drawn in by the depth of a story but of course it is human nature as well to enjoy a puzzle. It is like a treasure hunt, they like following clue after clue. Some people read my books first for the story and then re-read them to see how the trail was laid.

In the know

"I keep a record of all my characters – I have two shoeboxes filled with index cards. At the moment I have 261 characters in the present series and some run to twenty cards each. You have to remember what they look like and which bits of the plot they are actually aware of. In my early days, I drafted out a whole elaborate scene on the premise that one character knew something that he was, in fact, entirely unaware of. I had to re-write the whole thing with someone who did know what was going on – luckily there was one. I've come to the conclusion that there are easier ways of writing fiction – but I do think this one is fun."

Even those who are successful at it admit that writing historical fiction is hard work, time consuming and obsessive. But it's also true to say that if you have the desire and the stamina, it can be a richly rewarding area (both personally and financially). And if you've got what it takes to actually write your best-seller - who knows? – you could end up creating a little bit of history yourself. Certainly food for thought. ●

Take it Tudor limit

"One problem," says Dunnett, "is avoiding areas of research that other people have exhausted already. I avoid periods and people that have been overwritten; I don't write about Henry VIII or the adult Mary, Queen of Scots. If you want to stay fresh ... it is an awful lot of work. For one series, I was reduced to reading ten volumes of military memoirs, in 16th Century French to find one new kind of trick I could use in a skirmish."

If you can't beat 'em ...

IT was Dorothy's husband, Allstair Dunnett, who first directed her towards historical novel-writing; when she complained that there were no more books of the type she liked to read, he said, "Write your own then." And with a determination for which she is now renowned, she went on to produce the six books of the Lymond series of historical novels; she is currently working on the fourth book of the eight part House of Niccolo series.

Dorothy has also been a professional portrait painter since 1950. As you would expect from someone who can piece together intricate historical novels, she is a great organiser and sought after to sit on numerous committees and councils. She also writes the Dolly series of detective novels featuring Johnson Johnson. Perhaps there is a message here for anyone who claims they never have enough time to write.

WHEN Charles Palliser finished The Quincunx he was so convinced that it would of little interest except to the academic world that he ordered 60 copies for himself at the author's discount, just to prove to his friends that he had written a novel. Since then it has topped the best-seller lists in Britain, been adopted as the Book of the Month by the American Literary Guild and been translated into six languages.

Massachusetts-born Palliser graduated from Oxford University in 1970 with a first in English. After a year teaching at Huddersfield Polytechnic, he moved to Strathclyde University to teach 19th and 20th Century fiction. During this time he published several literary articles and wrote two plays, one of which toured Scotland in 1980, while the other was broadcast on Radio 4 in 1982.

Historical novel-writer Dorothy Dunnett. Watch out for the next instalment in her House of Niccolo series

The writing of The Quincunx took a full 12 years and weighs in at a massive 420 000 words. Its success still suprises Palliser and he marvels at some of the spin-offs from it – such as appearing in a literary festival in Las Vegas with Kirk Douglas, and hearing that his novel had been translated into Dutch in a mere six months.

NOVELS BY DOROTHY DUNNETT

LYMOND SERIES
Game of Kings (1961), Queen's Play (1964), The Disorderly Knights (1966), Pawn in Frankincense (1969), The Ringed Castle (1971), Checkmate (1975). All available in Coronet at £4.99.

NICCOLO SERIES
Niccolo Rising (1986), Spring of the Ram (1987), Race of Scorpions (1989).
All available in Penguin. Niccolo Rising and Spring of the Ram at £4.99, Race of Scorpions at £5.99.

NOVELS BY CHARLES PALLISER

The Quincunx (1990).
Penguin Books, £7.99.

Ready, Teddy, Go

A teddy bears' picnic and a PCW are not quite as incongruous a pairing as you might suppose; Sophie Lankenau reviews a new program for the under-5s.

Fun school 3
£24.99 ● Database
Educational Software
051 357 2961

The problem with creating educational software for the under fives is not how to make something sufficiently simple to understand, yet constructive enough to assist in the learning process. It is rather how to hold the interest of an inquisitive child.

Parents of toddlers will be all too familiar with the scenario of setting their offspring up with his or her favourite toy, only to find it flung rather unceremoniously to the floor in disgust.

To captivate and keep the interest of the very young is the task tackled by the authors of Fun School 3 – and the results are impressive.

On booting up, a pictorial menu appears showing a screen from each of the six elements of the program. To select a game, all you have to do is press the spacebar until your choice is highlighted. Pressing [RETURN] summons the game to the screen.

The first is a counting game. The screen shows a field with a picnic blanket, trees, clouds and flowers.

Teddy bear's picnic

The star of the games in Fun School 3 is Teddy, a podgy little bear in a vest with 'T' on the front. It's Teddy's picnic, and he is running a stock-take (the national curriculum is obviously keen to interest youngsters in small business enterprises even at this age) as he wants you to count the items in and around his picnic.

He does so by asking a question, which appears along the foot of the screen.

He asks you to tell him how many of a certain item are in the picture. The item in question is shown in a little box to the left of the screen, so that it is easy to match it up with its equivalent around the picnic blanket. Correct answers transfer you to a different screen where Teddy is perched on a staircase with a pot of honey a few steps out of reach. Your skill in counting gradually enables Teddy to jump the steps one by one, until the honey is within his reach.

The questions are simple at first, involving numbers below three and the various items are clearly separated. After a few questions, images become more interspersed and although it is still easy to see how many Teddys there are, the proliferation of cups, teapots and cakes makes it more demanding.

The answers are entered by pressing the relevant number on the keyboard (which can be done by whoever is supervising). Wrong answers are indicated by the appearance of the correct one on the screen.

Action man

The next game is **Actions**, which involves Teddy in a variety of frenetic pursuits. There is a selection of activities at the foot of the screen and you choose which one you would like Teddy to do.

Selection is made by pressing the spacebar until the activity you want is highlighted, and then pressing [RETURN]. Initially, you choose from a selection of about five; juggling, eating, sleeping, listening and playing, for example. The options change as you play, with each new action replacing the last.

This is perhaps the most amusing of the six games, simply because the excellent graphics make Teddy's movements so accurate.

You can also have fun making him go from, say, dancing to sleeping (where you see him lying flat on his back with his little tummy heaving up and down), very quickly and then back again.

The point of the game, clearly, is to ask the player to associate verbs with the actions they describe. Changing levels (by pressing the [PASTE] key) extends the actions on offer, together and reverses the line of questioning.

First of all you choose an activity for Teddy, and then you are asked 'What is Teddy doing?' Meanwhile, the actions selection has changed, and you have to reselect the action being carried out. Successful selection produces an addition to Teddy's house, which is being constructed in the background.

Letters is another kind of matching game, this time based at the 'alphabet fairground'. The objective is to match up the letter shown with a selection from the bottom of the screen. Success eventually earns Teddy an ice cream.

The game entitled 'Matching' is a shape matching exercise, which involves more shapes the higher the level. It results in money falling into Teddy's piggy bank.

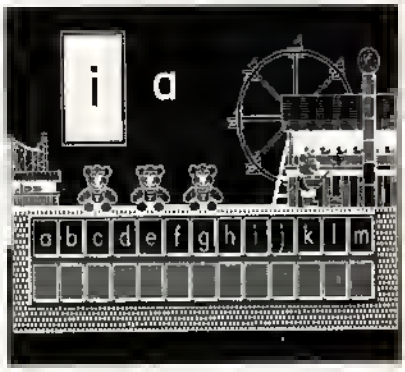
Artistic impressions

Gallery shows paintings on a wall, with empty title spaces. The relevant words are underneath the row of pictures, and spacebar manoeuvring matches the image with its title. There is more on the picture theme in 'Painting'. This simply involves adding various objects to a farmyard scene. You can select colours, obviously a feature denied to the PCW player, but levels of grey shading are offered as a compromise. The completed painting results in the final element, a tractor, driving off the screen.

'Fun School' is a title more than appropriate for this package. Not only is it easy to use and excellently illustrated, it is also a good introduction for pre-school youngsters to the kind of tasks waiting for them in the classroom in the years to come.

In graphic detail ....

Actions, Level 1: Teddy's range of available actions change and expand as you progress



Letters: just match the letter in the large box by selecting it from the display underneath

Fun School 3

Pluses
- ▲ Excellent graphics
- ▲ Original ideas
- ▲ Genuine educational value

Minuses
- ▼ Slow to load

Ease of use	4/5
Documentation	4/5
Range of features	5/5
Challenge	5/5
8000 Plus Value Verdict	18/20

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MasterScan is for 8256 & 8512 only.
It is a good value scanner for digitising bold black and white line drawings. Please call for advice before ordering.

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Amsoft	12.00	21.95
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SCA 768k Rampack for 8256	136.85
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Interested in upgrading your 8256 but don't fancy DIY? We can now offer a fitting service on FD2 disc drives and internal memory expansions for the 8256, including collection, fitting, testing and return to you by courier within seven working days.
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Iansyst Crash Course	18.95
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Crash Course is aimed at the novice typist, and teaches 'correct' typing from the outset. Two Fingers is for more experienced keyboard users, and gradually coaxes you into using all of your fingers on the right keys!

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8256/8512, 14 metre fabric	each	3.95
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PRINTERS

All of the following printers are supplied with the necessary cable for your 9512. If you have an 8256 or 8512 you will need a suitable interface, such as the SCA Professional at £49.95. A suitable cable will then be supplied to fit this. We are happy to give our advice on printers. Please call any of the numbers shown below during normal office hours

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STAR LC-10 Mark One	169.95
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Upright Citizen

Quality output at a budget price? No, we're certainly *not* kidding. Alec Rae takes the 124D, Citizen's brand new 24-pin printer for a quick dip

Citizen's 124D, claimed by its makers to be 'the lowest-priced 24-pin printer on the market today.' As well as an improved quality of 24-pin printing, the machine offers a very sophisticated range of features

Citizen 124D
£279 ● Citizen
0895 72621

When printer manufacturers Citizen came up with a £279 24-pin printer, there was an immediate assumption that this would be of real interest to PCW owners. It isn't that PCW owners are, by definition, cheapskates. It's just that many of them are now looking for better output from their computers – especially now that many machines are getting older and the original printers are beginning to show signs of age. One of the greatest blessings - and one of the greatest limitations - of the PCW is its 'bundled' printer. For the cost of less than most computers, Amstrad offer both a monitor and a printer.

For 9512 owners, the output is quite acceptable for text, but there is no chance of producing graphics. The 8000 series owner can handle graphics, on the other hand, but the text output isn't really up to the standards required for professional business use.

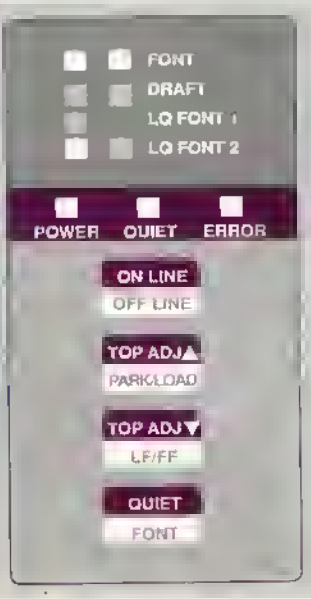
For both models, the 24-pin printer is the obvious compromise. Like the standard 8000 series printer, the Citizen 124D is a dot matrix printer. The big difference is that instead of having a row of nine pins in the print head, the Citizen has 24 – two rows of 12.

Letters and graphics are created just like photographs in a newspaper – in a series of thousands of little dots. The computer works out where the dots should go and raises the correct arrangement of pins on the print-head.

By using so many more pins, the 24-pin machine can obviously create far more complex graphics. And it can give text the nicely rounded look of a daisy-wheel or laser printer by filling in the gaps in the 'stepping' – the ragged edge sometimes seen in the curves in some letters.

The need for speed

Admittedly in the bigger sizes of text (the quadruple height and width, especially) there is quite obvious 'stepping' on the 124D. But it is all comparative. The normal letter quality text is beautifully rounded and almost indistinguishable from daisy wheel printing without an eye-glass. And you probably wouldn't attempt quadruple size text with the standard 8000 series printer.



Using the keypad

You can control many of the functions of the Citizen 124D from the four keys in the control pad. Three have a double function depending on whether the top switch is On-line (ready to take data from your computer for the printer) or Off-line (ready to take instructions from the control pad.

For instance, the bottom key allows you to flick through the various fonts when the machine is Off-line or toggles between quiet and normal printing when On-line.

On-line, the middle two keys allow you to move the paper up and down. Off-line, the Park Load key allows you to switch from continuous paper to load single sheets. LF/FF moves the paper on by a line or by a page.

Optional extras

Citizen can offer you a memory upgrade for £12 which will boost your memory from 8k to 32k. This is useful for down-loading fonts (allowing the printer to use PCW fonts). It is possible to download up to 239 characters. Printer ribbons for the Citizen won't break the bank either - at just £4.50 a go.

At the same time as improving the quality, the 24-pin format can greatly increase the speed. By having so many pins, the 124D can manage with one pass what the standard printer needs two passes to achieve.

This is limited by the software you use. With many graphics packages, the speed tends to be limited more by the speed at which the computer 'thinks' than the capabilities of the printer. But when it comes to text, the 24-pin format can make a real difference. The two Near Letter Quality fonts provided are printed in one pass of the printer and yet are far more solid and rounded than the 8000 series printer can manage.

By the same token, the draft quality printout of the 124D is also far more solid than the draft quality of the 8000 series printer. It almost reaches the standard of the high quality mode in the 8000 series.

Faster than a speeding bullet

But this is not the only improvement. For example, a considerable saving can by achieved by the simple fact that the 124D can print in both directions.

If you have ever watched the 8000 series printer in Near Letter Quality mode, you will have noticed that it always prints from left to right – coming back to the beginning of the line for each pass.

The 124D prints from both sides, the way the PCW printer does in draft mode. This means that valuable seconds are not lost in the pointless task of getting the printer head to the correct starting position.

The results (printed overleaf) are easily seen. The makers claim that the 124D can achieve, under ideal conditions, 120 characters per second in draft mode and 40 characters per second in NLQ. When you look at the results of the time trials (see our chart above and to the right) the comparison with the 8000 series dot matrix is nothing short of spectacular. Based on printing a 500 word document (a good page of single space printing) the 124D took around a third of the time of the the PCW printer to produce a NLQ printout.

Comparing the 124D draft text with the PCW letter quality print (and, as previously said, they are quite comparable) the 24 pin printer took less than a sixth of the time of the PCW printer. Very impressive.

Naturally, with all those pins hitting the paper at the same time there is a fair amount of noise being generated. As the 8000 Plus budget does not extend to decibel metres, we had to resort to the time-honouredHMV noise test (pointing your ear at the printer and tilting your head like the dog on the record cover).

This proved, scientifically and conclusively, that the 124D was quite noisy, though probably not as noisy as either the 8000 or the 9000 series printers. But for those of a delicate disposition, the 124 is fitted with a Quiet printing mode.

This simply means that the printer takes two passes to print a line – fewer pins banging on the paper means less noise. It is probably quieter than the normal printing, but to anyone who has sat through a Deep Purple concert the difference was minimal. One advantage is that you can switch to quiet mode while printing – to answer the telephone, for example, or if you suddenly discover you have a headache.

What is perhaps more significant is that, by taking two passes, it is twice as slow. And yet it was still significantly quicker than the 8000 series printer.

Look - one hand!

And there are further time savings to be made by the ease of operation. The process of loading paper in the 124D is greatly improved by the inclusion of a manual sheetfeeder.

Sliding guides ensure that the paper always drops into the machine at the correct position and at the correct angle. The automatic paper feed does the rest, placing the paper in exactly the right position in mere seconds. You can load a page with one hand (well, two fingers to be accurate) – without all the juggling and adjusting normally associated with PCW printers.

The manual sheetfeeder is quoted at £40, perhaps on the pricey side for a bottom of the range machine. But it works so well that it is probably worth the investment.

You can, of course, load cut sheets (ie, not 11" continuous) manually without major problems, and the continous paper tractor is built in, a supremely sensible idea (well, how many times have you lost your paper feeder?).

Citizen also offer an £84 automatic cut sheetfeeder, which sounds a great idea, although we did not have the opportunity to test it.

(Continued on page 49)

Time trials on a 500-word document

	PCW 8000	CITIZEN
LocoScript letter quality	3 mins 25 secs	1 min 13 secs
Protext letter quality	3 mins 37 secs	1 min 17 secs
Protext letter quality (quiet)	2 mins	23 secs
Protext draft	58 secs	33 secs
Micro Design graphics	6 mins 32 secs	5 mins 42 secs

Steady on the pins

Citizen have brought out this model at a time when all the forecasts are that the 24 pin printer market will be a major growth area. It has been predicted that there will be a 18.5 per cent increase in the sale of 24 pin printers in 1990 and that 40 per cent of these will be at the cheaper end of the market.

Star burst

The natal charts printed overleaf are from the program Personal Computer Astrology by Electric Ephemeris (071 700 0666), 396 Caledonian Road, London N1 1DN - and costs £99 incl. VAT.

Passing the test

The first thing an 8000 Plus reviewer looks for on any printer is the little button on the front with 'TEST' written on it. By pressing this button, (even when the machine is not linked up to a computer) you can have a print out of all the fonts available to the printer.

This does two things:
a) It proves that the machine is working and the only reason it won't print anything is because you haven't set it up right and
b) It gives you a list of all the fonts and you don't need to look for any more.

The first glance at the Citizen 124D is therefore a little nerve wracking when you discover there is no little button that says 'TEST' on it.

This means that immediately the reviewer has to contemplate the unthinkable and read the manual. As very few printer manuals have been short-listed for the Booker prize, this is usually not recommended.

Admittedly the Citizen manual is better than average. Anyone who has curled up in front of a roaring log fire with a good printer manual will know this is not saying very much but, at least, this one is written in English, does not assume a degree in Computer Science and has a reasonable index.

The Citizen 124D 'test': this shows all the fonts (and their sizes) and all of the characters available in each font.

It therefore does not take too long to discover that the same tests can be achieved by loading the paper, switching the machine off and switching it back on again while holding down the fourth button (FONT). This prints out the fonts in all the sizes available.

By carrying out the same exercise while holding down the third button (LF/FF) you get a complete print out of all the characters available in the font chosen at that moment.

And by doing the same thing while holding down the second button (Park/Load) you can also get a printout of the current settings – an invaluable piece of information while you try to fathom out the inpenetrable mysteries of the DIP switches (see The Little Dipper margin note.)

As these features are only really useful when setting up the printer (when you have the manual in front of you) it seems reasonable to do without the 'TEST' button to cut costs in an economy version machine – even if such an ommission could run the risk of inconveniencing the odd-8000 Plus reviewer somewhat.

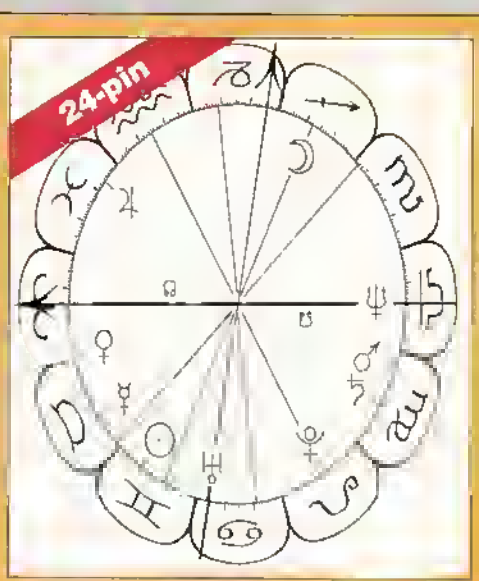
A day in the life of the Citizen 124D ...

Micro Design

Here we have a Micro Design-produced image which has been printed out first on the native 8000 printer and then on the Citizen 124D.

As you can, no doubt, see from the second printout, the 124D printed this heavy half-tone image much darker than on the native 9-pin dot matrix. This is because where the machine perceives there to be a lot of shading, the availability of more pins means that the pixels can be placed more closely together, resulting in a much darker printout.

It was also noticeable that the time-savings in printing graphics were substantially less than text: 5 minutes and 42 seconds on the Citizen as opposed to 6 minutes and 32 seconds on the 9-pin.



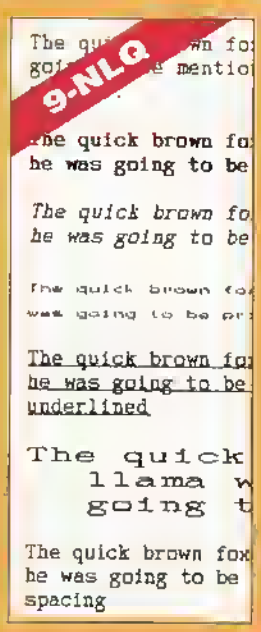
Electric Ephemeris

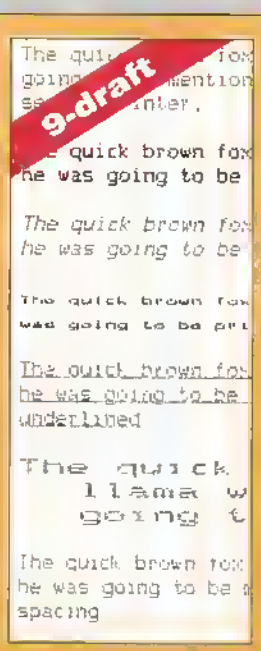
Again, the native 9-pin dot matrix printout is on the left and the Citizen offering is on the right.

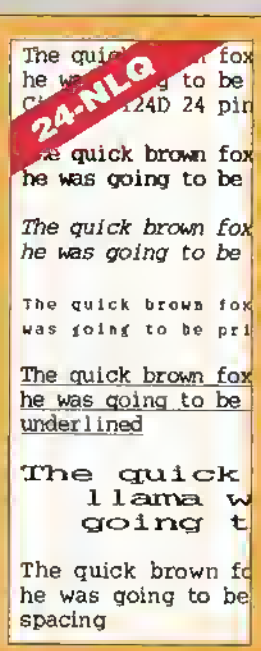
On the second natal chart, there is a certain amount of 'vertical stretching'. This distortion on the y-axis always occurs when printing graphics on a higher resolution printer - unless, as is the case with our llama above, specific 24-pin printer drivers have been written for the program concerned.

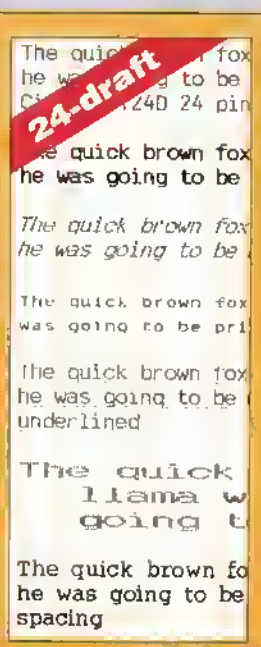
Fonts

It's not until you come to text-handling that the benefits of the printer can truly be seen. Here we have NLQ and draft printouts on first the 9-pin, then the 24-pin. There's little difference between the draft 24-pin and the NLQ 9-pin versions. In the second two printouts, we have the Citizen's Roman font displayed first in plain, then in bold, italics, superscript, underlined, enlarged and finally proportionally spaced faces. The results are, we're sure you'll agree, very impressive indeed.









Seeing it in print

The 124D will make a stab at working with a wide variety of software. It worked, without major hitches, with all of the software we tested it with; we were particularly impressed with its text-handling capabilites.

There was a tendency with graphics for the 124D to distort some images and with MicroDesign 2, it was inclined to make the pictures much darker than the PCW printer did; then again, this is probably just a matter of trial and error to get it right. It was also noticeable that the time savings in printing graphics were substantially less than text.

The ability to work with most software is largely because the 124D has an Epson emulation. This is computer talk for "It can pretend to be an Epson printer." Emulations are particularly handy when you bring out a new printer. By pretending to be another, well-established printer you don't need programs modified or printer drivers specially written to run old software.

Programmed for success

The Epson emulation is particularly handy as the PCW printer also pretends to be an Epson, so most software should run without problems. But, just in case you should want to link it up to other computers, the 124D can also pretend to be the IBM Proprinter or an IBM graphics printer. Most of the older software available does not use printer drivers (those clever little files that tell a printer what codes a program is going to use). But those that do, do not pose a major problem.

Protext was easily-adapted using SETPRINT.COM. This allows you to alter any of the settings in your printer driver and is great fun to explore. Once you are in Protext, just type SETPRINT and a menu will appear.

Choose number one **Set printer options** and cursor down until the word **internal** is highlighted. Then press the left cursor button and you will have all the options presented in turn. Stop at the **parallel** option and press [STOP]. Press number seven (**Save options**) and choose a suitable name for the new printer driver (why not PAR(short for Centronics).PTR and save it to your Protext start-up disc.

Exit back to Protext and then type in Printer Par and, after that, everything you print will come out on the 124D. During our testing, the PCW printer driver worked perfectly on the 124D, although if any small quirk did appear, all the information to put it right is available in the 124D manual. This information would also allow you to write printer drivers for other programs if necessary.

LocoScript does cause a few more problems. Essentially, LocoScript 1 just cannot be persuaded to work with anything other than the standard printer.

New versions of LocoScript 2 have just been produced to cater for all sorts of 24-pin printers but a simple compromise is just to copy INSTALL.DRV and all the files for LQ2500 (the Epson printer driver) into group 0 on your start of day disc. This includes LQ2500.PRI and three files starting LQ2500.#

These are all be transferred to group 0 in M drive when you start up. Once loaded, you can choose the **LQ2500** option in Settings [f6] and follow through the options. Remember to pick **CPS parallel** in the printer options menu. Then save the SETTINGS.STD to get it loaded every time you use LocoScript. When printing out an existing file, you press [PTR] and [f5] **Printer** to pick the correct printer driver. Probably other printer drivers work but we certainly know that LQ2500 causes no major problems.

Pick a font – any font

The fun of having an external printer is that it usually offers you different fonts. The 124D has two well known favourites – Roman and Courier.

Roman is a seraphed face (little blobs to mark the ends of the letters), quite similar to the PCW typeface, although there are differences other than the smooth edges and solid print of the 124D version.

Courier is another seraphed face, probably best known as the standard type-writer face. This might be considered a mistake. If you have invested in a computer and a 24-pin printer, you probably won't want your letters to be mistaken for the output from a tatty old type writer. A sans face (one without seraphs) might have been more distinctive.

Admittedly, the draft face has no seraph and is of a reasonable standard, although whether you would be happy to use it for final copy is debatable. All the faces come in condensed, italic, underlined, subscript and superscript (in effect half size), and double and quadruple height and width. It can handle proportional spacing without problems and there is even the option for reversed type (white on black) although that could probably go through ribbons pretty quickly. Obviously you can change fonts and sizes through the software. But, like most external printers, the 124D also allows you to change fonts manually on the printer. By clicking the FONTS button, while the printer is OFF LINE (not able to print) the three font options are presented.

(Continued from page 47)

Be careful, however, when choosing your printer cable; it must have a male parallel fitting (sometimes known as Centronics to its friends) at both ends. Most printer cables in computer shops are for IBM compatible PCs and are not suitable.

These physically link up the printer to your PCW. The cable fits into the side of printer and into the lower fitting on the RS232.

Making the link

However, anyone who has dabbled with external printers will know that physically linking the PCW and printer is, by far, the easiest task. Getting the PCW to run the printer is often heart-breaking.

Making the printer produce something for you is remarkably simple (this should work for most external printers, by the way. Not just the 124D).

All you need is an ASCII text file (you can easily produce that in LocoScript or any word processor. See the manuals) and the utilities DEVICE.COM and the ever-faithful PIP.COM, which you find in any good CP/M utilities disc.

With the correct disc in the drive, type DEVICE and the screen will fill with all manner of fascinating information – such as CONIN:=CRT and CONOUT:=CRT. Ignore all that. What you are interested in is the last line which states, rather cryptically, LST:=LPT. This is archaic computerese which literally translated means your "listing device" is the "line printer". In English it means when you print anything it comes out on the PCW printer.

It then politely asks you if you want to change anything. Along the top you will see the list of options CRT, NONE, IO etc. The one you are looking for is CEN short for 'Parallel' (well, to be strictly accurate it's short for Centronics but they mean the same thing). Just type in LST:=CEN and, thereafter, anything that is printed will go to the external printer instead.

It will stay like this until you change it back (DEVICE LST:=LPT) or until you switch off. So if you are using an external printer all the time it is sensible to add DEVICE.COM to you start of day disc and include a line with DEVICE LST:=CEN in your PROFILE.SUB. This will automatically set up the computer to use the external printer every time you start up.

All you then have to do is place the disc with PIP.COM and the ASCII file ("I have one here that I prepared earlier, which I have happened to call TEST.TXT") in the disc drive and type in the sequence PIP LST:=TEST.TXT (or whatever the file is called). Assuming the printer is on line (with the 124D press the top button (ON LINE) until the green light goes off), the file will be printed before your very eyes. ●

The little dipper

By far the most obscure feature of any printer is the DIP switch panel. For the 124D this is contained in two banks of tiny switches found under the cover just above where the printer cable is inserted.

These simply allow you to change the default settings of the printer. Should you want to change the character pitch to 12 characters per inch instead of the standard 10 characters per inch, you would flick on the fourth switch on the first bank.

To change from the Epson to the IBM emulation you would flick on the first switch on the first bank. The manual explains all the options. The standard settings are all quite reasonable; you can probably get away with leaving them alone.

Citizen 124D value verdict

Pluses

- ▲ Much faster than the PCW printer
- ▲ Good value for a 24 pin printer
- ▲ Can handle most PCW software

Minuses

- ▼ Some problems with graphics
- ▼ Could have had a sans serif letter quality font

Ease of use	4/5
Documentation	4/5
Features	5/5
Performance	4/5
8000 Plus Value Verdict	17/20

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The Good Club &Training Guide

With such a variety of software for the PCWcurrently on the market, learning how to get the best out of your machine can often seem to he a daunting treck lhrough poorly-written manuals and stodgy jargon.

There are many options for lhe would-be LocoScript, CP/M or BASIC experl. Go into any major bookshop and you will find a healthy selection of manuals and handbooks on the many applications for the PCW. However, one of the best ways lo learn is face lo face with an expert – or, at least, someone whu has more PCW experience than you do.

A PCW User Club can provide such an environment, where people can gel logether on a regular basis to swap ideas, advice and information. An informal almosphere such as lhis can be extremely productive – and there's no better way to learn than with the one-to-one help of an expert.

Alternatively, you could recruit the aid of such an expert to your home. There are numerous training organisations throughout the country, some of which send representatives to visit you either at your home or the workplace. Other courses are conducted on a correspondence basis, or part-time in colleges and schools.

Below is a selection of clubs and lraining organisations which can offer such help. Why not make contact; it could be an inexpensive, effective way to a better understanding of what your PCW can do for you.

Clubs

Ground Floor User Group
Holme Street, Hebden Bridge
West Yorkshire
Enquiries: **Jae Campbell 0422 844991**

Retford PCW User Group
14 Machin Close, Tuxford, Nr Newark
Nottinghamshire NG22 OJZ
Enquiries: **Paul Tew 0777 870038**

CP/M and MS DOS User's Group
43 Birkbeck Road, Wimbledon,
London SW19 8NZ
Enquiries: **David Nesbitt 081 543 0824**

Hampshire PCW User's Group Personal Computers
Unit, Cable Street, Northam,
Southampton
(address for meetings only)
Enquiries: **Paul Day** (at the address above)

Hereford Computer Club
18 Church Street, Hereford
Herefordshire HR1 2LR
Enquiries: **David Rose 0432 267213**

Teesside Amstrad User Group
8 Knayton Grove, Greenvale,
Stockton-on-Tees, Cleveland
TS19 7RW
Enquiries: **Gladys Baker 0642 580018**

M25 User Group
58 Islip Gardens, Northolt
Middlesex UB5 5BY
Enquiries: **Tony Brown 081 841 3666**

Littlemore Amstrad PCW User Group Peers School (Adult Education Centre), Littlemore, Oxford
Enquiries: **R G Hughes 0865 242720**

The Worldwide Amstrad Computer Club (WACCI)
9 South Close Twickenham TW2 5JE
Enquiries: Steve Williams (above address)

Training

Banna Word Processing
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Subjects: LocoScript 1 & 2, SuperCalc 2, Cardbox
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Computer Training Centres UK Ltd
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West Sussex RH12 1AY
Subjects: LocoScript 1 & 2, Wordstar
Enquiries: **0403 211440**

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Office International
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CM19 4SJ
Subjects; MicroDesign, ProScan
Enquiries: **0279 444313**

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Subjects: LocoScript 1 & 2, CP/M, Sage Accounts
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New Clubs!

Since last month's Good Club Guide was published, we've heard news of some new clubs around the country - and abroad.

So, if you live in York, Hastings, or even New South Wales (Australia) or Wellington (New Zealand), turn to our regular Club News update on page 8 of this issue. There you can find out where the clubs are based, and how to get in touch with the organisers.

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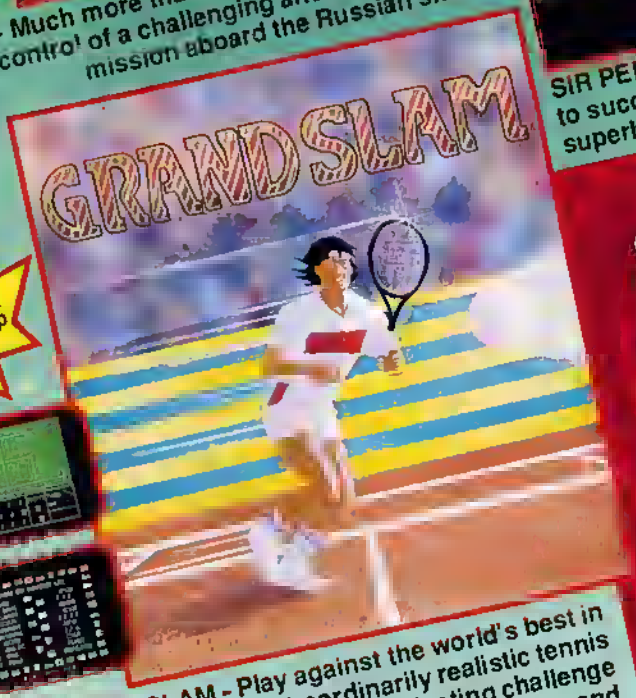

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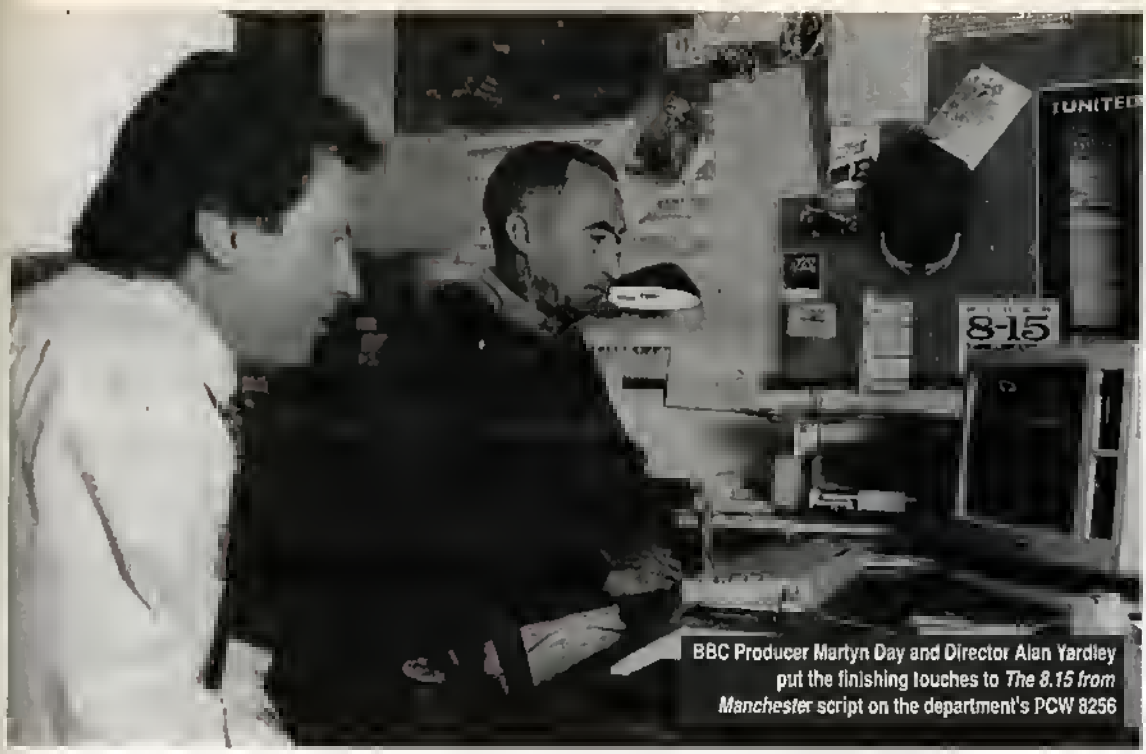

BBC Producer Martyn Day and Director Alan Yardley put the finishing touches to *The 8.15 from Manchester* script on the department's PCW 8256

Guest Appearance

Each Saturday morning during the summer months, the fruits of a lone PCW's labours are transmitted nationwide to our TV screens. Sophie Lankenau went along to BBC Manchester in an attempt to catch this busy machine in the act

You don't have to live near the station in Manchester to witness the departure of the 8.15. In fact, you could live in Glasgow, Bristol or Land's End and still be privy to this event. Providing, of course, that it is the summer season, and you are tuned in to BBC1 at a quarter past eight every Saturday morning.

BBC Manchester's magazine programme for children and teenagers, The 8.15 from Manchester, has just completed its first run through the summer months, and has proved to be a resounding success. And while the team behind the programme get to work on next year's series, an exhausted PCW 8256 is getting its strength together for another summer of hard work.

A script for a two and three-quarter hour live television programme can be up to 80 pages long. The volume of paperwork, therefore, for a 22-week series of broadcasts, is enormous. The 8.15 from Manchester went out live every Saturday morning from April to September – and all the scripts were devised and prepared on one PCW 8256.

The PCW's home is a breezy top floor office in the BBC's Oxford Street studios in Manchester. Surrounded by a mass of television and video equipment, it occupies a quite modest corner of the room considering the role which it has played in the production of the programme. Although it is used by most people in the office, it can generally be found at the mercy of series producer Martyn Day, who, despite the odd swear-word and thumping of the desk, is eternally grateful for the workload which the PCW has taken on.

Manual dexterity

"The PCW is very primitive," said Martyn, "but basically we could not have done the series without it. It has produced 55 hours of television, which as far as I'm concerned, is a tremendous achievement for one machine."

When Martyn is not using the machine, its second greatest fan is *8.15* Director, Alan Yardley. Alan already had a PCW at home when the office machine was acquired, so he knew the basics of LocoScript inside out. It fell to him to show his colleagues how to use the machine. "When we bought the machine, I set about writing my own mini manual for the people at work. What it does is just explain the procedures which we must follow here in a more straightforward way than the official version."

The 'procedures' involved in producing a television programme are long and involved in terms of both planning and administration. The PCW plays a vital role at every stage of the programme's development. LocoScript 2 is the word processor which Alan and his colleagues have chosen to produce all the written material for the show.

"Our main requirement of the PCW is producing scripts," Alan told us, "which have to be prepared very quickly. Even though a script for one programme can be 80 pages long, it doesn't mean that it is filled with text. We also have to put in all kinds of technical directions as well, for the cameramen and the lighting crew. That information is on the left hand side of the page, and the actual words spoken are on the right."

Targetting the shot

Alan takes a good deal of his work home with him as well. "This is one of the first areas where having a PCW becomes a godsend. Transporting a long script between home and work is far easier when it's on a 3 inch disc than when it is a bundle of A4 paper," he explained. "It also means that I can work at home, developing the ideas that I have for the programme."

One such idea was a short piece ➤

H.P. source

The Hewlett Packard DeskJet Plus was put through its paces in the October issue of 8000 Plus, where it was awarded a very respectable 19/25. It costs £769 (plus VAT) and you can get in touch with the manufacturers by telephoning 0344 369369.

If the price is not right for you, HP are bringing out a modified version of the original, called the DeskJet 500, at a reduced price of £599.

No way in?

Many people want to get into the television industry, but all too few ever do anything about it. There are numerous openings at the BBC, and not just the 'glamour' jobs either, such as presenting. There are engineers, electricians, make-up and wardrobe staff, caterers, carpenters, graphic designers - the list is endless. So, if you've had a burning desire to work in the industry, start writing to the relevant departments - before somebody else takes your place.

Tricks of the trade

8.15 Producer, Martyn Day, has two rather interesting claims to fame (aside from his illustrious career in television). The famous lion whose roar announces the beginning of an MGM film, would not be growling at all without Martyn, who was responsible for dubbing the sound in to the picture. No mean feat, considering that the lion was not roaring at all when the shot was filmed. He was yawning.

And, if you've ever wondered how Dr Who's tardis disappeared, Martyn's the man to ask, as he made it all happen. But he's not telling anyone how...

for the drama slot on the programme. The storyline is written in LocoScript 2, and consists of a two-page skeleton description of the plot and characters. "After the storyline has been distributed, I then write to all the actors and crew. The best way for me to do this is to use LocoMail; I do a simple mailmerge routine, and get in touch with everyone involved in that piece of the programme."

The next step is to arrange a schedule for any filming to be done on location. Details of the equipment required and the location address are prepared in LocoScript and, again, distributed using LocoMail. After that, it's a question of piecing together the diverse elements of the programme, and finalising a running order for the big day.

Despite the workload on the shoulders of one PCW8256, the machine has remained in tip top condition. Alas, the same cannot be said of its native dot matrix printer.

Dots away!

"The original printer packed up quite a while ago," Alan told us. "It was inevitable considering the volume of work it was outputting." Fortunately, the BBC had some new hardware in for evaluation shortly before the demise of the dot matrix.

"I was looking at the Hewlett Packard Deskjet and it seemed to be a very good little printer. When our dot matrix went down, we were able to get the HP Deskjet immediately. We got the printer drivers from Silicon City, who were extremely helpful. Not only did they supply the software, but they even phoned me up several days afterwards to check that everything was OK. I wish more suppliers were like that!" he laughed.

With characteristic perseverence, Alan soon got to grips with the foibles of the new printer. "The first thing that I realised was that you had to change everything written in LocoScript 2 from 12 pitch to 10 pitch in order for the Deskjet to print out properly. Loco 2 uses 12 pitch by default, whereas the Deskjet runs at 10 pitch," he explained.

Standing the test of time

Inevitably, no machine will fulfill every task it is set to perform perfectly. In the business of producing television programmes, the question of deadlines is one which prompts Alan Yardley's first criticism of the PCW. "The memory in the 8256 is just too small for our needs," he told us. "With the volume of work which we handle, it can be very frustrating to suddenly be told that you're out of space. It's like being backed into a corner, and there's no escape."

A second problem is the lack of facility to do time calculations on the machine. "The most important thing about live television is getting timings perfect," said Alan. "It would be a great help to be able to ask the machine to tell us if we are over or under running, and then allow us to make the necessary changes. I have been able to do time calculations on an Apricot system, but not with the 8256."

On the whole, Alan is pleased with LocoScript. "Facilities such as page numbering and Find and Exchange are extremely useful when it comes to producing scripts," he told us. "For example, when you are casting a drama, the name of the actor might have to be changed. With Find and Exchange, you can go through a document relatively quickly swapping one name for another. The same is true with the presenters' scripts – we might have a last minute substitution in a guest slot, and the name will need to be changed quickly before rehearsals so that they don't call the new guest by the old guest's name!"

A star is born

One of the other points about the PCW which has impressed Alan is the range of software available for the machine. "There's a great deal of new packages which I would like to experiment with, but time is always a problem. I'm quite interested in MicroDesign, although not for work purposes. The graphics which are used in television have to be top quality, the very best of what is available," he explained.

For the moment, *The 8.15 from Manchester* owes its prompt departure during the last series to the behind the scenes work of the PCW.

"You're always going to be wishing that there was something which a given system could do better," commented Martin, "that's inevitable. I have come from being computer illiterate to reasonably competent on the PCW, and the typewriter which I had at home hasn't been touched since I began using the 8256. That's proof enough of a good machine to me." ●

It'll be all right on the morning

Producing a live television programme every week involves an immense amount of preparation. Although basic ideas can be determined in advance, the bulk of the programme's content is decided in the six days between the end of one broadcast, and the beginning of the next.

"The most important thing is to establish the running order," explained Alan. "You have to be sure that an item is placed in the best position to complement the one before and after it – it's no good having a 400 piece marching band in the studio followed by a live pop-group. It's like having a set of building blocks – you have to sit down and piece them together until they fit properly."

The crew on the programme work a six-day week while the series is under way, and put in about 10 or 12 hours a day. By Thursday, the scripts are "almost complete", after having been typed in on the PCW. The actual script to be used in the programme is retyped, and the final camera instructions are decided.

"Because of the lack of time, we can only rehearse the show on one day," Alan told us, "and that is the day before it goes out. With live television, you don't want to rehearse too much anyway, because it would take away the feel of the programme on the day," he added.

Even the scripts, which are prepared all week, are not binding. "There's a fair amount of ad-libbing in a show like The *8.15*," Alan explained, "and it is down to the professionalism of the presenters to decide when, where and how best to do it."

Had there ever been any disasters while the programme was going out? "Fortunately, nothing drastic has happened to us yet," laughed Alan, subconsciously touching the wooden desk in front of him. "Live television relies upon everyone concentrating on the instructions they have on their scripts."

As Director of *The 8.15* , Alan Yardley pictured above (not at the helm of his PCW, we might add) carries much of the responsibility as to its success or failure

When you tune in to the programme on Saturday morning, it is hard to imagine the amount of people who are working away behind the cameras. The two presenters, Charlotte Hindle and Ross King, are not only looking at the camera, but also a team of some 30 technical staff and another 20 production people.

Alan Yardley is to be found surveying the proceedings from the 'gallery', a control-room overlooking the studio. "It's a bit like a spaceship," he told us, "with loads of television screens and everybody on the edge of their chairs hoping that everything is going to run smoothly!"

As the director of the programme, Alan carries much of the responsibility as to its success or failure. "Having said that," he added,"there is no one person who can act as a catalyst – it's down to co-ordination and concentration. Everyone plays an equally vital role in the programme."

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Mail-Storm

Save time and money; discover the easy way to write to loads of different people in one fell swoop. Tony Hart and Mini Office Professional walk you through the simplest of mailmerge operations

The PCW, as well as being a favourite in the home, can be used equally well in numerous office applications. Letters are the usual domain of the PCW. However, in many offices or small businesses, the role of the PCW could be extended beyond single letter generation, to include what is normally called a "mailshot".

Too often a mailshot is associated with the tons of junk-mail that are deposited through the letter-box each day. However, mailshots can be used very effectively for numerous other pur-

1 Database structure

The original golf club database is shown here. It contains typical information on each club member, such as the name and address and the subscription fee. Note the inclusion of an " informal name" field. This is used to begin the letter. " Dear Jim" reads much better than " Dear Mr Smith".

This database is stored in the Mini Office database module under the filename **OLDLINKS.DBS**. A good tip is to keep your database simple. This makes it far easier to use and maintain. This membership database is the starting point for the merge.

The golf club membership database is laid out as shown

7 The final step

Letter and database entries

Now, we are down to specifics. We must assign the letter field, or string, to its relevant database field. To make it easy, we're using the same number for the letter field as for the database field.

Move the cursor to the Type column in the first row. Press **{D}ata**, then **[1] [RETURN]** to denote the members' titles. This assigns the first database field, the member's title, to the first data field, described as **{1}**, in our mailmerge letter.

Move to the next row using the cursor keys and repeat this step for fields 2 to 9. The screenshot shows the completed set-up. All of the fields in the letter are now assigned to fields in the database. Press **[EXIT]** twice to reach the word-processing menu.

8 And finally ... the Result

Before printing the letters, have a sneak preview of a finished letter on the screen. To do this select **Print** then **Preview**.

The letter will appear on the screen. Press **[STOP]** as it scrolls up, check the letter, then press any key to continue. It should look very similar to the one shown here.

To print the letters, load the paper into the printer and select **Print**. The first letter will be printed, followed by a message **Press any key to continue**. Load a new sheet, press any key and continue until all the letters have been printed.

Finally, to save this mailmerge set up, select **Load/save** then **Save document**. Answer **[Y]**es to save the mailmerge letter, then save the details by choosing **Load/save set-up**.

The catalogue screen will be displayed with the filename **OLDLINKS.PRX** at the bottom of the screen. Press **[ENTER]** to save the mailmerge set-up file and **[EXIT]** three times to reach the Mini Office main menu. You now have a complete record of the mailmerge so the next membership mailout could be even faster.

6 Assigning the values

To merge the database, **OLDLINKS.MRG** and the letter, **OLDLINK.DOC**, the letter fields should be linked to the relevant database fields. The first step is to select the **Database** option from the word-processing menu, and **Assign strings** from the database menu. This is shown in the screenshot and will take you on to the next, and final, stage of the mailmerge.

Choosing the option to assign strings

5 The mailmerge letter

The letter can now be edited to accommodate database entries. Select **Edit document** and the standard letter requesting membership subscriptions will be displayed. Position the cursor to where the name and address of the member are to be printed.

Enter **[ALT]/D1 D2 D3 [RETURN]** which are, respectively, the Title, Initials and Surname, as shown in the previous screenshot. Enter **[ALT]/D4, [RETURN]** for the first address field then repeat with **D5** and **D6** for the other two address fields. Position the cursor after **Dear** and enter **[ALT]/D7** for the Informal name.

The other details can be put into the letter in the same way. Notice how the codes are displayed in a darker shade. The completed mailmerge letter is shown in the screenshot. Finally, press **[EXIT]**.

poses. Clubs can use them to personalise an event-promotion letter, or issue membership subscription fees. A newsagent could produce personalised letters to all of those customers whose payments are overdue. A small company could effectively use a mailshot to invite its customers to a seminar.

When the PCW is used in conjunction with a mail-merge package, such as Mini Office, several benefits will be gained. The letters can be personalised not only with the names of the recipients, but with particulars about the recipients, such as subscription rates. Last, but not least, there are the usual benefits of being able to produce professional-looking documents in as short a time as possible at a very low cost.

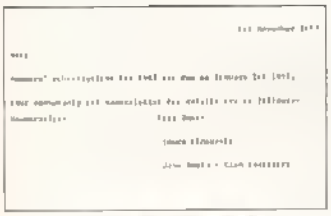
What is a mailmerge?

Very simply, a mailmerge is the merging of information, relating to an individual, with a standard document, such as a letter. The information can be kept as a database or file, whereas the document can be generated by a word-processor. The real benefit of the Mini-Office package is that the two modules - database and word-processor - are integrated. This makes mail-merging very easy to accomplish.

A mailmerge could be well utilised, for example, by a golf club secretary. We take you through the process of a mailmerge, step by step, using the membership database of a golfclub and combining this with a standard letter requesting fees. The resulting letters will be personalised with the members' names, addresses, membership status and related subscription fees.

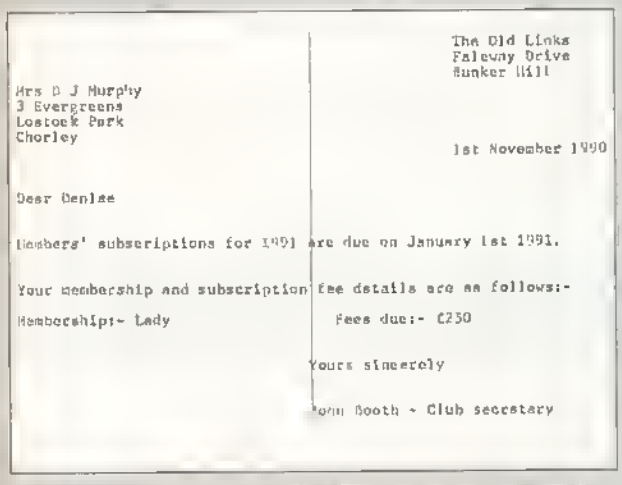
2 The standard letter

The mailmerge letter can be created from scratch or, as in this case, from an existing letter document. The standard letter, shown here, requests payment of membership subscriptions. No details concerning the member are included as these will be added automatically during the mailmerge process.



A typical standard letter

The letter can bewritten using the Mini Office word-processing module. In this example the standard letter is stored under the filename of **OLDLINKS.DOC**.



Just one of a whole pile of personalised letters produced by the mailmerge

The standard letter is adjusted to fit in the entries from the database

3 The mailmerge database

Saving a mailmerge database

To create the mailmerge database from our membership database, we can either do a simple copy of the full database or use only a selected part of the database. The mailmerge database is created as follows.

First select **Database** from the Mini Office menu, then choose the option to **Load/save**, followed by **Load data file**. You can now select the membership database by typing in the database name, or by using the cursor keys. Our example database is **OLDLINKS.DBS**.

If you wish to mark only certain records, this can be done by going into the **Edit data** routine, stepping through the records, **[M]arking** those you wish to include.

To save the mailmerge database, select **Save mail merge file** as shown in the screenshot. Choose to **Save all records** (or **Save marked records**, if you want to merge only part of your database). The default database file name is changed, at the bottom of the screen to **OLDLINKS.MRG**. Then **[EXIT]** back to the main menu.

4 Viewing the database

Before the assignments can be made you need to decide which entries will be included in your mailmerge letter, and whereabouts they are found in the mailmerge database. To do this, select **Word processor** from the Mini-Office main menu, then **Load/save** from the word-processor menu. Choose the option to **Load document** and answer **[Y]**es to the reminder about over-writing memory files. From the catalogue screen select the required document. In this example, we're using **OLDLINKS.DOC**. Then press **[EXIT]**

Viewing any record in the database allows you to note where each entry is found

To begin with, let's have a look at a record from the new mailmerge database to check where each field is located. Mini Office provides a useful **View database** function to do this within this word-processing module.

Select **Database**, followed by **Load database**. Choose the mailmerge database from the catalogue screen - in our example, **OLDLINKS.MRG**- then select the option to **View database**.

Now, note the number of each of the database fields. As shown in our screenshot: **Title** will be field number **1**, **Initials** - field No.2 and so on, These field numbers can be used to decide what to merge into our standard letter. When you have made note of the relevant fields, press **[EXIT]** to return to the main word processing menu.

Listings

How talkative is your PCW? Karen Donaghay shows you how to get your PCW answering back in this month's listing.

Prompt.ASM by Ian Turley

It's amazing how many people have a pet name for their PCW, some of them more flattering than others. But don't you ever wish that your PCW could answer back? Something a little more exciting than A>, perhaps? Well, here, in this month's listings, is your chance.

Ian Turley must have the most polite PCW we've ever come across. He has successfully persuaded his machine to come out with all kinds of niceties. Instead of the ordinary CP/M prompt, Ian is greeted with, **What can I do for you, Ian?** or, **I can hardly wait for my next exciting task.**

This quick conversion course, courtesy of the following pages, will transform your PCW, into the most attentive of companions. When you switch on, instead of your usual prompt, your PCW will print a message on to the screen. You can have ten different messages and these can be as sycophantic, or as cheeky, as you like. The messages come up in fairly random order and are the only alteration to the way that your PCW operates. All of the CP/M commands are entered in exactly the same way as usual.

The program is, in fact, written in assembly language, not in our more usual listings language, BASIC. Typing the program in - as it is shown below - shouldn't take too long. One advantage of assembly language is that the lines are far shorter than those of an average BASIC program. This program must be typed in using LocoScript.

```
;standard RSX prefix structure                    1401
;                                                 0036
        db 0,0,0,0,0,0                            036E
        jmp ftest                                 052F
next:   db 0c3h                                   0606
        dw 0                                      012D
prev:   dw 0                                      0355
remov:  db 0                                      0543
nonbnk: db 0                                      05BC
        db '*PROMPT*'                             05BD
        db 0,0,0                                  01FA
ftest:  mov a,c                                   07F3
        cpi 2                                     0234
        jz begin                                  0456
        jmp next                                  04AB
;                                                 0036
```

The standard code above is required to create any extension to the resident CP/M

```
;listing to intercept BDOS function 2             155B
;                                                 0036
begin:  mov a,e                                   077E
        cpi '>'                                   02CB
        jnz next                                  04R1
        lxi h,0                                   0357
        dad sp                                    03F8
        shld ret$stack                            086C
        lxi sp,loc$stack                          099C
        mvi c,105                                 0394
        mvi d,0024h                               04A8
        call 005                                  034D
        jmp div                                   0421
        cont: mvi c,9                             063D
        call next                                 0516
        lhld ret$stack                            0857
        sphl                                      02FB
        ret                                       0200
```

The CP/M function to send information to the screen is intercepted

High and low

Assembly is described as a low level language. Mallard BASIC is what is known as a high level language: that means it has been designed to be easily understood by people; it mimics the way in which we think and talk. Assembly, on the other hand, is a low level language because it is only one level removed from the language of 0s and 1s that the processing unit actually reads.

The resulting document will go through a series of conversions, which we will later go on to explain, before eventually becoming a .COM file. The result, Prompt.com, can be used in the same way as any commercial program, by merely typing in **Prompt** at the CP/M A> prompt.

The first step is to type in the program as it appears here. Just [C]reate a new document in LocoScript (call it Prompt.doc), and copy the program in. The numbers in the right-hand column should be ignored. They are used for checking purposes only (turn to our next listing, Check3.bas, to find out how you can do this).

Back chat

Once you have saved Prompt.doc, you need to convert it into ASCII format. Choose the option **Create ASCII file** from the main LocoScript menu. To do this, press **[f7]** in LocoScript 1, or **[f2]** in LocoScript 2. The new ASCII file should be called **Prompt.ASM**.

You then need to leave LocoScript and restart your PCW using your CP/M disc. If you only have one disc drive, you need to move the file Prompt.ASM onto the M drive after rebooting. To do this, type in the command, **PIP [RETURN]** and put the Prompt.ASM disc into the drive. Then type in **m:prompt.asm = a:prompt.asm.** This file must now be transformed from an ASCII document into usable code. There are a number of utilities provided on your PCW master discs to help you do this. Find the PCW master disc entitled Programming Utilities and insert this into the drive.

You can now type in the command, **rmac m:prompt [RETURN]**. (If your file is on a b drive disc, don't forget to replace **m:** with **b:** in each of these commands). Next type in, **link m:prompt [OP][RETURN]**. A few

Prompt.Com adds that personal touch to each and every one of your CP/M prompts

```
                                                    0000
;                                                   0036
;list of prompts                                    0A56
;                                                   0036
mess1:  db '> How can I help you? $'                0F5C
mess2:  db '> Your willing servant awaits. $'       1742
mess3:  db '> What next, boss? $'                   0D9C
mess4:  db '> Ready and waiting. $'                 0F0A
mess5:  db '> Yes? $'                               0859
mess6:  db '> Lets go! $'                           0939
mess7:  db '> This is fun. $'                       0C23
mess8:  db '> Anything else I can do? $'            1171
mess9:  db '> Im beginning to enjoy myself. $'      163D
mess0:  db '> Instructions please! $'               11F2
;                                                   0036
```

The above prompts can be changed, at will, to whatever messages you require

```
;prompt to be printed                              0C28
mes1:   lxi d, mess1                                06A5
        jmp cont                                    04A5
mes2:   lxi d, mess2                                06AD
        jmp cont                                    04A5
mes3:   lxi d, mess3                                06B5
        jmp cont                                    04A5
mes4:   lxi d, mess4                                06BD
        jmp cont                                    04A5
mes5:   lxi d, mess5                                06C5
        jmp cont                                    04A5
mes6:   lxi d, mess6                                06CD
        jmp cont                                    04A5
mes7:   lxi d, mess7                                06D5
        jmp cont                                    04A5
mes8:   lxi d, mess8                                06DD
        jmp cont                                    04A5
mes9:   lxi d, mess9                                06E5
        jmp cont                                    04A5
```

The instructions to print each prompt on the screen are given here

All systems go

The operating system for the PCW, in other words CP/M, is being changed to accommodate the A> messages. In techno-talk, this is actually called a Resident System Extension. Blimey, what a mouth full!

Nitty gritty

Do you fancy really getting to grips with the deeper mysteries of your PCW? If so, check out this book: The Digital Research CP/M Plus manual, published by William Heinemann Ltd. Be warned, it is not for the faint-hearted: this is the serious stuff.

lines will appear on the screen (see our second screenshot).

The next step is to reinstate your ordinary CP/M disc in the A drive. Then type in, **rename m:prompt.rsx = m:prompt.prl**. Finally, to produce the Prompt.Com file, you have to change discs again. Insert your Programming Utilities disc back into the drive and enter, **gencom m:prompt [null]**.

The Prompt.Com file is now stored on your m drive, ready to be tranferred to a disc. Put your CP/M disc back into the drive and type in, **pip [RETURN] a:prompt.com = m:prompt.com**. This will actually transfer the file to your CP/M disc. (If you would rather keep this file on a different disc, then change discs after the first [RETURN].)

You are now ready, finally, to test it out. Simply typing **Prompt** is all you need to do. Your normal **A>** prompt will become something like **A> Your willing servant awaits**. Take a look at the screenshot overleaf to see these new prompts in action.

These commands can transform a simple ASCII text file, written in LocoScript, to a fully fledged .COM file, that can actually alter the way that CP/M operates. The new prompts will be resident on the PCW, until you switch off the machine

To make these prompts display as an automatic extension to your system whenever you use CP/M, the command Prompt.Com must be included in your Profile.sub file on your CP/M start of day disc. This can be set up as follows. First, type in **PIP profile.sub = con:[RETURN]**. You can now enter the commands you wish to keep in your Profile.sub file.

Type in **prompt [RETURN]** **[ALT]/[,]** **[ALT]/[Z]** to make the new prompts an automatic feature of CP/M. You now have, at long last, the PCW that chats back.

```
;                                                    0036
div:    sui 5                                        03BE
        jm mes1                                      0439
        sui 5                                        028A
        jm mes2                                      043A
        sui5                                         028A
        jm mes3                                      043B
        sui 5                                        028A
        jm mes4                                      043C
        sui 5                                        028A
        jm mes5                                      043D
        sui 5                                        028A
        jm mes6                                      043E
        sui 5                                        028A
        jm mes7                                      043F
        sui 5                                        028A
        jm mes8                                      0440
        sui 5                                        028A
        jm mes9                                      0441
        lxi d, mess0                                 055B
        jmp cont                                     04A5
ret$stack: dw 0                                      0813
        ds 32                                        01D5
loc$stack:                                           0573
        end                                          01AD
```

The end of the line; the seconds are divided by 5, until negative, to decide which prompt is printed

Blankety blank

As far as Check3.bas is concerned, one blank space is much the same as two. This is usually no problem, but can, very occasionally, effect things. For example, to test for a space bar, within a program, it must be written as " "(one empty space) , not " "(two empty spaces).

How to type in a listing

So, you want to produce your own BASIC programs? Unlike our first listing this month, Check3.bas is written in BASIC and is typed in as follows. The first step is to enter the realm of CP/M. Switch on and put your CP/M disc into the drive. Then type in **BASIC**. A short message will appear on the screen followed by the BASIC prompt, **ok**.

Flex your fingers: you have some serious typing ahead of you. Each line must be copied in exactly as it is printed in the magazine, leaving out the column of figures printed on the right hand side.

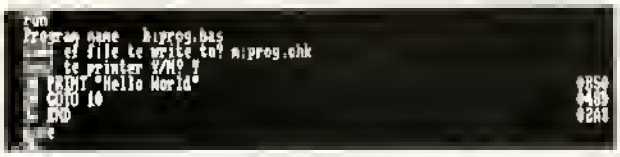
Keep an eye open for any mistakes. The easiest time to correct them is before you press the **[RETURN]** key. At this stage, you can make corrections by highlighting the mistake with the cursor keys, and using the **[DELETE]** key.

When you've come to the end of your listing, type in **list** and your program will be reproduced on the screen. Spot the mistakes and then change them by typing in **edit** and the line number. The line appears and you can then correct it as before. Save your program with **save "** followed by the name of your program - in this case Check3.bas. To use your program, type in **run**.

Once saved, you can reload your program at any time, by typing in **basic**, as before, followed by **load "** and the name of your program.

Check3.bas by Adrian Wilkins and Peter Crane

How's your typing then? Do you have to scrutinise your listings, again and again, to track down that illusive mistake ? As you know, they are not always easy to find.



Check3.bas is put to the test with a simple three line listing

Semi-colons and colons may look pretty similiar on the page, but they have entirely different effects in a program. Or the letter O, for example, can easily be confused with a zero, with disastrous results. Checking your listings can, let's face it, become a somewhat arduous task.

Check3.bas can save you the trouble. It allows you to locate the precise line where the mistake occurs, saving you hours of frustration. It works, quite simply, by producing a printout of your listing, with a column of hexadecimal figures down the side.

These can then be checked against our version of these figures, printed in the magazine, alongside each listing. Any discrepancies between the two, mean that there is a mistake in that particular line. Once you know which line to look at, the error can usually be located in a matter of seconds.

Check3.bas is very easy to use. The program you intend to check, should be saved in ASCII format. To do this, type in the normal **SAVE** command, followed by an **a**; for example, **save "prog1.bas", a**. Then load Check3.bas and type **run**.

You will be asked for the name of the file that you wish to check, and the name of a file to save the results into. Check3.bas works out the numbers, and saves a new version of the listing, complete with the additional column. And that is all there is to it. What could possibly be easier?

The figures are, in fact, produced by using the computers internal representation of characters. Every single character, is represented by a number, called the ASCII code. These codes are used by Check3.bas to calculate a hexadecimal number, which is unique to that line.

In addition, Check3.bas can also, on request, produce a printout, during the run of the program. This means that, within seconds of running Check3.bas, you could have located the errant line, and be well on your way to producing a working program.

So, if you are uninspired by error messages such as, "Subscript out of range on line 40", this is the program for you. No more cryptic advice – just one easy step to hassle-free listings.

On the case

Upper and lower case characters are treated as identical by check3.bas. It translates everything into upper case, before it even begins to do the summing up.

```
10 INPUT "Program name    ",prog$                                   0F21
20 IF INSTR(prog$,".") = 0 THEN prog$=prog$+".bas"                  1408
30 IF FIND$(prog$)=""THEN PRINT "Program not found";PRINT;GOTO 10   21FD
40 OPEN "I",1,prog$                                                 0780
50 INPUT "name of file to write to";prog2$                          16A3
60 INPUT "Send to printer Y/N";ask$                                 11A3
70 IF UPPER$(ask$)="Y" THEN prt%=1                                  0F96
80 IF prog$ ="" THEN END                                            040D
```

Lines 10 to 80 check that the file exists in ASCII format, and open the file

```
90 OPEN "O",2,prog2$                                                0817
100 WHILE NOT EOF(1)                                                0928
110 LINE INPUT #1,z$                                                08A7
120 y$=UPPER$(z$)                                                   05F8
130 check%=0 : j%=0                                                 06BA
140 FOR i% = 1 TO LEN(y$)                                           0988
150 y%=ASC(MID$(y$,i%,1)) : IF y%=32 GOTO 200                       1068
160 IF y% <> &HFC GOTO 180                                          0A66
170 PRINT "Save it in b***** ASCII!" : END                          110C
180 j% = j% + 1                                                     02FE
190 check% = check% + (y%-32) * (j% MOD 7 +1)                       0E08
```

The next step is to read in each line and perform the calculation. This process is continued, until the end of file character is found

```
200 NEXT                                                            0414
210 PRINT #2,z$;TAB(70);HEX$(check%,4)                              0E8D
220 PRINT z$;TAB(70);HEX$(check%,4)                                 0F22
230 IF prt%=1 THEN LPRINT z$;TAB(70);HEX$(check%,4)                 1788
240 WEND                                                            03F7
250 CLOSE 1:CLOSE 2: PRINT "done"                                   1041
260 END                                                             036F
```

The program produces the results, for each line, on screen and to a file. They are also printed out, if required

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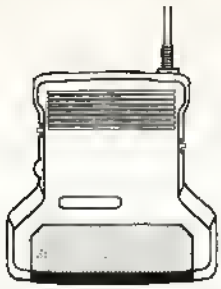

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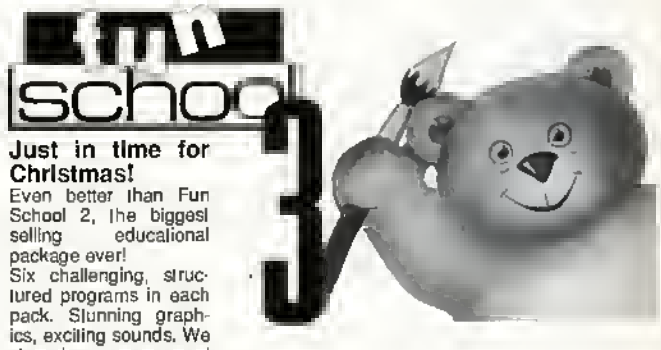

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LANGFORD

A page in the company of David Langford

Legal frictions

Freelancing as a writer can involve you with sleazy operators who sooner or later may display the cloven hoof. Earlier this year I found myself suing publishers in the Clerkenwell County Court — all by remote control, without having to walk further than a nearby letter-box. You might need to do the same one day, so here's the terrible saga.

Before, I'd always been lucky: my publishers paid what they owed me, eventually. (Well, there was one dear old chap who sold his firm and retired; he reckoned the new owners inherited all debts; the new owners reckoned not; in the end I wrote off the outstanding four quid.) This luck changed with the final instalments of my SF review column for the now defunct games magazine *GM*, published by Croftward Ltd — accursed be their name.

Learning that even the editors were no longer getting paid, I began to worry. Cheques continued not to arrive. Panic! This was where the SF grapevine came in handy. I was soon in touch with a writer (Marcus Rowland) who'd already successfully sued this outfit. Picking his brains eased my first foray into the deadly arena of Small Claims litigation....

Court circulars

Most of us dread legal action, feeling with some justification that going to court is equivalent to lighting a huge bonfire of banknotes around which solicitors and barristers will dance a merry jig for as long as your life savings last. But mere writers tend to chase relatively small sums, and if the amount is under £500 there's no question of solicitor's fees.

So... suppose you've been owed money too long by some rotten, lousy publishing firm which out of cowardice we'll call Ripoff Ltd. "Proof of debt" is the basic requirement: a contract or acceptance letter which mentions a fee should do, together with a copy of the book/magazine/newspaper containing your work. If you have only the latter, some research might be needed to establish their standard payment terms - which, all too often, seem to be "Payment on lawsuit only."

You need to give advance warning in a formal letter. Typically you'll have sent half a dozen and got no reply, but a final one is still necessary — containing the magic words, "Unless I hear from you within seven days I will issue proceedings in the XXXX County Court...." .

My own inclination is to *say* "seven days" but actually allow more leeway for a dreamy interval of Post Office limbo. However, I might have done better to rush as fast as possible... as will emerge. Meanwhile, there's the question of which county court to name: for defaulting publishers, it's the one in the district containing their Registered Office. Don't worry if a check at Companies House shows Ripoff Ltd to be registered in the Orkneys: you needn't visit.

The finer points

Now it's time for some official forms, available free from your own local County (not magistrates') Court. You want a "Request for Issue of Default Summons" and the accompanying Form EX50, actually a lucid little booklet about the whole procedure. This contains an easily lost slip of paper listing court fees — currently 10% of the debt you're chasing, with a minimum of £7 and a £37 plateau for debts of £300 to £500. Get two copies of the summons form, my pal advises — you might spoil the first, although I smugly didn't.

While you're there, pick up forms EX50B and C, explaining how to translate a court victory into actual debt recovery, and how much *this* will cost. Sadly, nobody told me about that bit.

By the way, the useful EX50 booklet contains examples of how warning letters should be phrased, and specimen Statement of Plaint drafts. Perhaps some public-spirited soul will one day put together a public domain disc of such documents and information: the PCW Small Claims Kit, with all the standard forms of plaint ready to load into LocoScript for adaptation to your own case.

"Plaint" is mere legalese for complaint, and after a heading which names the court, leaves room for a case number and gives both parties' addresses, the writer's Statement, which consists roughly of: "we agreed this; they published that; payment not received by whenever; letters requesting payment sent then, then and then; letter warning of court action sent on such-and-such a date; the Plaintiff claims £XXX, being the fee owed."

There's a box measuring four by five inches for all this on the summons form, which is why it's a good wheeze to attach a separate and perfectly word-processed statement instead. (This is how my pal ruined his first form — trying to get everything into the box.) In fact you should print and attach two identical ones.

You then post everything to the relevant court — form, statements, court fee, and the traditional stamped addressed envelope in which you'll be sent an acknowledgment carrying the all-important case number.

The bitter end

It went like clockwork. The court served a summons on my loathed publishers; two weeks later, as explained in the booklet, I bunged in the "Request for Entry of Judgement by Default" form (also free from the local court), and was awarded the full amount of my debt plus the £37 fee.

All I had to do was collect it.

I puzzled at length over booklet EX50C, enticingly entitled "Enforcing Money Judgements in the County Court". Sending in bailiffs to seize the company's battered PCWs would cost me £38 and might not actually pay off, since the stuff would be sold by public auction for peanuts (how can I get to these sales?).

Around then, the wretched company announced its creditors' meeting, and the first thing that emerged from the accounts was that all their worldly goods were forfeit to the bank as security on the *third of a million* owed them....

Paradoxically, a company that's a million pounds in the hole can laugh at small creditors: the big ones (bank, VAT, Inland Revenue, etc.) are now calling the tune and couldn't care less about ordinary bruised people.

Your hero emerged £37 poorer, but with a wealth of exciting new experience and a stern moral. The moral is: don't start even a small-claims action against vile defaulting publishers, until you're sure there are some assets for you to grab. ●

TIPOFFS

The greatest story every told! (almost)

Can't strike gold in LocoScript? Does BASIC, to be frank, incense you? Keep going "mm, err..." in Miero Design? Then give yourself a Christmas present – read Tipoffs, the pages with a sackful of gift-wrapped goodies. There are crackers this month on LocoScript, LocoFile, Mini Office, Stop Press, SuperCalc, BASIC and many more. One wise man gets a £30 Christmas box from us for his plum LocoScript tip: Alun Rees of Haverfordwest.

Do you have any gems of wisdom? Help others over their cold turkey! Send your tips to *Tipoffs, 8000 Plus, 30 Monmouth St, Bath BA1 2XF.* Even that's a gift – it's Freepost, so get writing. There's no time like the present.

Data loss?

Is there any way to port to a PC the information I have stored in my PCW database program, Datagem? I have inserted the data into a LocoScript document where the items are separated by spaces.

Keith Mason, London W5

8000 Plus: *Probably the quickest way is to use [EXCH] to swop all occurrrures of three spaces to two spaces. Doing this repeatedly should make all fields separated by two spaces, which you can then exchange for [TAB]s or [RETURN]s or something. (It can't be single spaces, because otherwise fields which contain single spaces – such as address lines – will get broken up). If some of the fields occupied all or nearly all the space available then some fields may be separated by one or no spaces – these will have to be separated manually.*

Alternatively you can write a short BASIC program to take out the fields and rewrite them as a file with one to a line, though to say more we'd need to know a lot more details about the files.

Once you've got a LocoScript file with the fields in a sensible layout, one to a line, you can port them to the PC using LocoLink.

Dated tip

Is there a way of making LocoScript's disc manager catalogue my files by the date they were created, rather than by their name?

K Harris, Weston super Mare, Somerset

8000 Plus: *No (even using CP/M's date stamping utility) unless you name your files by the date in YYMMDD format. For instance, you might call a letter written on 27th January 1991 to RJ Smith 910127.RJS perhaps. LocoScript then presents you with a sorted directory of your files. This way of writing dates is now the international standard, being part of the ISO system of international codes, precisely because it is directly computer sortable.*

On the other hand, suppose you keep your letters in a group where the first eight letters of each document name are the name of the recipient. You can date the letters by using the last three spaces in the name after the dot; 105 for January 5th, 930 for September 30th and so on. October, November and December can be A, B and C respectively (where A, B and C stand for 10, 11 and 12 in the manner of hexadecimal) so that Christmas Day is C25, Bonfire Night B05 and so on. This way all the same letters to the same recipient are filed neatly in order of date.

LocoScript sorts files by their first letter, in the order
" # $ % ' 0 ... 9 A...Z _ { }
so, if you want to force some files to be listed on the directory before others, rename them to have a ' in front of them for example.

Smart moves

How can I move, not copy, a group of LocoScript documents which do not share a common suffix, from one disc to another?

And how can I erase a group of LocoScript documents?

Phillip Langley-Essen, Buxted, E Sussex

8000 Plus: *The erasing of a group of Loco documents is easy. Say you want to blat everything in group 5. Switch on your PCW and insert the CP/M disc. At the A> which appears, insert the LocoScript disc and type*
USER 3 [RETURN]
ERA *.* [RETURN]
USER 11 [RETURN]
ERA *.* [RETURN]
USER 0 [RETURN]

You have now erased everything from group 3 and also from group 11 (where LocoScript stores the limbo files from group 3). The last line returns you to group 0. You'll have noticed the A> prompt change to 3A> and 11A> en route.

Moving a complete group of Loco documents from one disc to another is done by copying them then erasing the original lot. Suppose you are copying all of group 5 from disc X to group 5 on disc Y. Switch on the PCW and insert the CP/M disc. At the A>, type
USER 5 [RETURN]
PIP [RETURN]
*and at the * which appears insert disc X and type*
M:=A:*.* [RETURN]
and when it finishes insert disc Y and type
A:=M:*.* [RETURN]
(if you wanted them in, say group 4 on disc Y, this line would be A:[g4]=M:.* [RETURN]). Now re-insert disc X and erase the files in group 5 as above.*

Prints charming

I have a Panasonic daisywheel printer, connected up to my PCW8256 via an RS232 interface. It works with LocoScript 2, but how can I get SuperCalc 2 and the Cracker to output to it?

Bryan Watkins, Totnes, Devon

8000 Plus: *Run up CP/M and insert side 3 of your master discs. Type*
DEVICE LST:=CEN [RETURN]
and a list of assignments appears. Thereafter all printer output should go to the Panasonic. To make printer output go to the normal printer, type
DEVICE LST:=LPT [RETURN]

If you have problems with a program refusing to print on the Panasonic, or if you want a copy of printer output from (say) a BASIC program saved as a LocoScript file, you can try the following trick. In CP/M, before running the program, insert side 3 of the CP/M discs (or just your CP/M disc on a PCW9512) and type at the A>
PUT PRINTER OUTPUT TO FILE M:TEMP [RETURN]
then run the program (BASIC, Cracker etc.) as usual. You can choose any file name apart from M:TEMP of course.

Nothing now appears to print; it's actually being interrepted and put into a file M:TEMP. When you finish, quit back to CP/M and use PIP to copy M:TEMP onto a disc (insert your CP/M disc, type PIP [RETURN], at the asterisk insert a disc and type A:=M:TEMP [RETURN]).

(To make the printer output be put on the printer again in CP/M, by the way, you can type
PUT PRINTER OUTPUT TO PRINTER [RETURN]
though of course in any case the diverting of printer output to M:TEMP stops when you switch off).

Then run up LocoScript as usual and create a new blank document on the disc with TEMP. In it press [f1] for 'Insert text' ([f7] if you have LocoScript 1) and move the cursor over TEMP then [ENTER].

The text that would have gone to the printer is inserted in the Loco document, which you can now print on the daisywheel in the usual LocoScript way if you have LocoScript 2.

Sheet lightning

SuperCalc users can insert spreadsheets into a LocoScript document in a quicker way than that suggested in Tipoffs, October ("Spread it about") – if you're not fussy about the positions of the tabs.

A simple .PRN file from SuperCalc can be inserted directly into a LocoScript document (using [f1] in LocoScript 2, [f7] in Loco 1); the items are padded out by spaces so that the result looks the same on screen as it did in SuperCalc. It will print out fine in anything except proportional spacing.

Obviously the number of columns and their width must fit into the paper size, so arrange this with the /Format command in SuperCalc. Take off the borders with /Global,Border; use the /Output command and write the spreadsheet to disc which will automatically give a .PRN file.

Dennis Eagles, Hereford, Hereford & Worcs

Esrever ni

How can I reverse the screen in BASIC, to get black letters on a white background on my 9512?

J Mitchell, London SW1

8000 Plus: You can switch between a black-on-green/white or green/white-on-black screen in BASIC with the following commands.

```
PRINT
CHR$(27)+"b"+"?"+CHR$(27)+
"c"+CHR$(0)
```

will reverse out the screen while

```
PRINT
CHR$(27)+"b"+CHR$(0)+CHR$
(27)+"c"+CHR$(0)
```

puts it back to normal. This listing will enable you to select dark or bright screen at the beginning of a program.

```
10 esc$ = CHR$(27)
20 bright$ = esc$ + "b" + "?" +
esc$ + "c" + CHR$(0)
30 dark$ = esc$ + "b" + CHR$(0)
+ esc$ + "c" + CHR$(0)
40 PRINT "Screen dark or bright?
(Press D or B)"
50 c$ = INPUT$ (1) : c$ =
upper$(c$)
60 if c$= "D" THEN screen$ =
dark$ ELSE screen$ = bright$
70 PRINT screen$
80 (program continues from
here.....)
```

Size does count

Supercalc 2 has a maximum size spreadsheet of about 50 rows on my PCW8256. I added extra memory but it made no difference. How can I get Supercalc to use this larger memory?

Peter Goodrum, Maidstone

8000 Plus: Supercalc is limited for various technical reasons to 30k or so, so there's not much you can do except buy something like Mini Office and re-type the lot!

Cup runneth over

In Tipoffs, November (Disc Runneth Over) you gave advice on how to split up a document so big that it could not be edited (87K on a 173K disc) into smaller more manageable ones. Unfortunately your method (using blocks) only works with LocoScript 2. Mr Fraser of Fort William will be a frustrated man if he followed your directions exactly, because blocks do not survive a change of document, and he will have lost some of his precious manuscript!

Even Homer sometimes nods...

J Newman, Honiton, Devon

8000 Plus: Whaaps! Sorry about that; here's the full, amended, procedure again.

The problem: you have a very large document and want to split it up into smaller ones.

The solution: Make sure you have a blank formatted disc first – you'll split off some of this huge document onto it.

1. Edit the file. Press [COPY] then [PAGE] three times then [CUT] then 0 (zero). The first three pages should be cut out (but saved to the memory temporarily – you can get them back later).

2. In LocoScript 1: Press [f8] 'Blocks' and give 0 as the block to save. You are returned to the dise manager; give group 0 of the M drive as the destination by moving the cursor into it and pressing [ENTER]. Give a suitable name such as BLOCK.1. You are returned to the document.

In LocoScript 2: Go to step 3.

3. Exit the document. It is saved with the first three pages cut out. If it won't save, repeat the copy-cut business again and end it with 1, not 0, saving it as BLOCK.2; if that still isn't enough, do it again with one press of page and end with 2, saving as BLOCK.3; and so on).

4. Now insert your blank disc and create a new file, calling it PART.1 or something.

In LocoScript 2, in the new file, press [PASTE]0 (and [PASTE]1 etc. if you needed to save more pages).

In LocoScript 1, in the new file, press [f7] 'Insert text' and in the disc manager move the cursor to M over BLOCK.1 and [ENTER].

The text cut out from the old big document is inserted in the new one. Finish editing.

5. Repeat steps 1 and 2 until you have split up MANUSCRP into several smaller files of about 8-10K each called MANUSCRP.1, MANUSCRP.2 etc.

Apologies to anyone who has lost a page or two of text; the damage shouldn't have been catastrophic. And anyway, you had been keeping a backup, hadn't you?

And as the school howler has it, Homer was not actually written by Homer, but by another man of that name.

On Spec

Anyone wishing to transfer Tasword documents, or BASIC programs, from a Spectrum to a PCW (like Nigel Bovey, Tipoffs, November) may find the following useful. Get a lead made up to connect your PCW's RS232 port to the Spectrum with these connections:

Sinclair	PCW
2	2
3	3
7	7
4 and 5	4,5 and 20

The PCW can receive the files using MAIL232 (on your CP/M or LocoScript 1 disc). Run up CP/M and at the A> prompt insert the disc with MAIL232 on and type **MAIL232** [RETURN]. When it loads up, press [f1] then [+] [+] (down cursor) [+] [+]. The top two numbers should read 50; this is the baud rate.

The Spectrum needs a comms package, and BASIC can control it. Type, save and run the following (on the Spectrum!):

```
10 FORMAT "b";50;OPEN
#4;"t"
20 LET a=30000: POKE a,0
30 LET b=CODE (INKEY$#4)
40 IF b 10 THEN POKE a,b:
PRINT AT 0,0;CHR$ b: LET
a=a+1
50 LET a$=INKEY$: IF a$=""
THEN GO TO 30
60 IF INKEY$="_" THEN
POKE a,0: GO TO 100
70 PRINT #4;a$;: GO TO 30
100 CLOSE #4
110 LET a=30000
120 IF PEEK a=0 THEN STOP
130 PRINT CHR$ (PEEK a)::
LET a=a+1: GO TO 120
```

To send messages just type them on the Spectrum; they should appear on the PCW when running MAIL232. Typing on the PCW will store characters in the Spectrum memory; press _ (symbol shift 0) to see them.

To receive BASIC programs set up MAIL232 as before and press [f3]. Type the name of the file to store in where it says 'receive' and press [ENTER]. On the Spectrum type the text of line 10 (i.e. omitting the 10 at the beginning). Load the program and type **LIST #4**. The program will appear on the PCW. When finished press [ALT] [STOP]. Then press [f7] [ENTER] and exit to CP/M.

To receive a Tasword 2 file from the Spectrum, set up MAIL232 as for a BASIC program. On the Spectrum, type and run the following:

```
10 FORMAT "b",50: OPEN
#4; "t"
20 LET a=32000
30 IF PEEK a
```

Kevin Sheldrake, Peterborough, Cambs

Quick file

A reminder to LocoFile users that when creating a new file that [ALT] with the cursor keys adjusts the size of a newly created box on the card, and [SHIFT] [ALT] with the cursor keys adjust the position of the box. Simple, but you can quite easily see what you're doing, and saves the trouble of getting the sizes and positions right by trial and error.

David Lagnell, Newnham, Gloucs

Staggering!

Here's a neat way to get a shadow effect in LocoScript. You do it by overprinting the same line twice, with zero line spacing and a different space at the beginning of each to 'stagger' it. The screen shot shows how. You can experiment with different fonts in LocoFont if you have it.

Basil Pigg, Bath, Avon

```
(+Pitch17).(+PitchPSD)Hank.Marvin.and.the.Shadows(+LSpace0)↵
(+Pitch12).(+PitchPSD)Hank.Marvin.and.the.Shadows(+LSpace1)↵
↵
(+Italic)↵
(+Pitch17).(+PitchPSD)Hank.Marvin.and.the.Shadows(+LSpace0)↵
(+Pitch12).(+PitchPSD)Hank.Marvin.and.the.Shadows(+LSpace1)↵
↵
```

Hank Marvin and the Shadows

Hank Marvin and the Shadows

A neat shadow effect in LocoScript. Looks complicated on screen, but prints out very nicely.

Got it taped

Tipoffs, October, gave details of how to design inserts for cassette tape boxes in LocoScript. Owners of Stop Press can design very nice inserts using the following layout.

1. Select L1 grids lock on
2. Select L6 X,Y counter
3. Select G4 square
4. Position the cross hair to 112,036 (press 7 FIND) then move the cross hair to 596,238 and press 7 (FIND). This gives the main square
5. Press 9 (UNIT) once. Position cross hair to 112,068. Press 7 and move to 569,014; press 7. Then press 9 (to give the title area).
6. Select L5 (rubber band) line drawing and move to 352,104. Press 8 (DOC). Pull down the screen to 352,238. Press 7 (to divide it into two halves).
7. The next set of moves are:
Move to 112,126; press 8; move to 596,126; press 7
Move to 112,138; press 8; move to 596,138; press 7
Move to 112,154; press 8; move to 596,154; press 7
Move to 112,168; press 8; move to 596,168; press 7
Move to 112,180; press 8; move to 596,180; press 7
Move to 112,196; press 8; move to 596,196; press 7
Move to 112,210; press 8; move to 596,210; press 7
Move to 112,224; press 8; move to 596,224; press 7
Move to 112,238; press 8; move to 596,238; press 7

You can also add text if you wish using [F1]. Save under clip art and print out as many as you want.

AC Hoskin, Halstead, Essex

Famous last

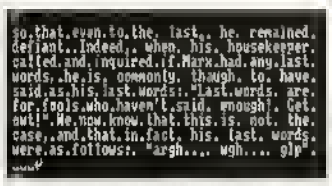
Long documents should be stored in LocoScript as a series of small files, each no more than 8-10K say. But if you use justified text and one document really has to end in mid-paragraph, LocoScript won't justify the last line because no text follows it.

The solution is to insert a space after the last word, and then hard spaces ([+] [SPACE]) until justification is enforced.

Alun Rees, Haverfordwest, Dyfed

8000 Plus: To make sure the last line (of spaces) doesn't muck up the printing, put a [+]LS0 at the beginning of the penultimate line (i.e. the last line of text) and a [+]LS1 (or whatever line spacing you use) at the beginning of the last line (of spaces).

You can't justify the last line of text because nothing follows it...

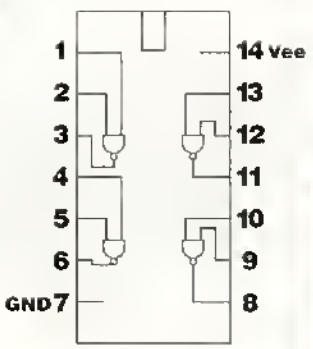


...unless you fool LocoScript into justifying that last line by adding hard spaces. Clever eh?

Red interface time

Anyone attempting to build the interface circuit in Tipoffs, October, to connect two monitors to the PCW may experience some difficult due to the incorrect numbering of half the pins on the 74LS00 chip in the diagram as published. The circuit shows the connections made to the correct physical locations on the chip but pins 8 to 14 are numbered the wrong way round; i.e. the 5v connection at the top of the diagram should be labelled pin 14, not 8, and the synch output at the bottom of the diagram should be 8, not 14. The diagram here should explain.

J Dean, Burton on Trent, Staffs



Before you start to follow October's tip on connecting two monitors to your PCW, study this diagram of 74LS00 connections carefully...

Marginally worse

I wish to print out on A5 paper in LocoScript 2. I have set the 'paper type' in the document to A5, and when I come to print out I 'switch to paper intended for document' (i.e. A5). But the text still prints out as if it were A5 – i.e. the right hand side of the document is printed on the roller!

I have had two separate engineers out. The first suggested the PCB was faulty and fitted another which made no difference. The second tried to suggest that the software was not supposed to do this.

Am I missing some vital point?

J Graham, Scone, Perth

8000 Plus: Yes. In a word, margins! Selecting A5 paper only makes LocoScript set the page lengths for you, not the margins. (Tipoffs in October gave the whole process of printing on A5 paper).

All you have to do is go back to the start of your original document and press [f2] and select 'change layout'. Use the cursors to move to position 12 and press [f1] selecting 'left hand margin' with [ENTER]. Then move to 77 and press [f1] selecting 'right hand margin' and [ENTER]. Now [EXIT] back to the editing screen. The text will realign to the new margins as you edit or move through it, and when you print out it should fit nicely onto A5 paper.

Might I suggest the only fault was with the software engineers?

Stick with it

Mini Office's database is ideal for maintaining your lists of slides or photographs (as described on p.54 of September's *8000 Plus*). But you can also print out the information on your database on normal address label stationery to make labels for your slides which are ready to stick on.

All you have to do is define a second label for your existing catalogue as follows:

1. Set up the label format to have 2 across the page, 66 characters across page, 2 as label depth, suppress excess spaces and blank lines between outputs.
2. Place the fields containing the information appropriately in the label. A bold asterisk in the top right will 'spot' the slide to aid correct loading in the projector. Exit and save the new label.
3. Set up the printer under 'Print report/label' menu to condensed print and select the slides for which labels are required.
4. Align normal continuous label stationery (available from any computer shop) and use the 'test print' option to check alignment. Select 'print report/labels' and [ENTER].
5. One label holds six slide labels. Cut them off and stick them to the slides.

F Horrocks, Spondon, Derby

This label in Mini Office makes labelling your slides easy

These labels can be cut up, each one having six slide labels

Short drive

In Tipoffs, October, you said how it is inadvisable to remove a disc from a drive while the motor is running. (Discs can become corrupted or the disc drive can be damaged).

However, all .EMS files (for LocoScript or CP/M) contain the hex string

0A 32 AF 1E 0C 0F 03

which contain the default parameters for the disc drive functions. The value 32 hex (50 in decimal) represents the time for the motor to switch off in tenths of a second – i.e. five seconds. You can quite comfortably reduce this time to two seconds by changing the requisite byte to 14 (i.e. 20 in decimal) using SID.COM in the normal way. The byte to change is at 0D41 in J14CPM3.EMS and at 3FC9 in J216LOCO.EMS.

John Eggeling, Todmorden, Lancs

8000 Plus: Thanks. For us to give detailed instructions for all the several dozen versions of CP/M and LocoScripts 1 and 2 would deplete too many forests, so unfortunately we'll just have to leave John's useful information as a starting point for those familiar with SID...

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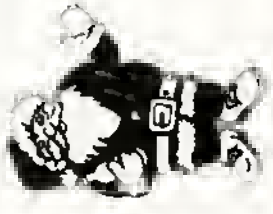

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The text within THE GRAPHOLOGIST was researched and written by a top London graphologist/criminologist James Woodward. The software was written by Martin Evans our consultant software writer

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In the sheet

I have Protext but it doesn't appear to work with the sheet feeder on my 9512, and even makers Arnor haven't been able to help. I have a novel manuscript to print out: I can of course do it on standard continuous paper, but that doesn't look very smart, and I can do it one sheet at a time, but that is extremely tedious. Is there anything I can do?

Helen Frazer, Glasgow

8000 Plus: If you really do want to use your sheet feeder I guess you'll have to print out your Protext documents in LocoScript. Make ASCII versions of your Protext files by following last month's lead tip and insert these into empty LocoScript documents on the same disc using [f1] 'Insert text'. Print them out using the sheet feeder as normal in LocoScript. Cumbersome, I know, but it's all I can think of!

Stop the flasher

I write programs in Mallard BASIC and find the flashing cursor annoying. Can I make it disappear temporarily?

Audrey Roper, Ayr, Scotland

8000 Plus: Yes. The line PRINT CHR$(27)+"f" turns the cursor off, while PRINT CHR$(27)+"e" turns it back on. These can either be typed in directly or included in programs.

Instant reprints

Can output to a printer from a BASIC program be saved as a file, so that if further copies of the printed result are required, the BASIC program doesn't have to be run again?

A Brown, Greengairs, Strathclyde

8000 Plus: Using PUT.COM you can make all the printer output be saved on disc; this can then be inserted into a LocoScript document and printed out as many times as you like. You're restricted to simple text (i.e. ABC, abc, 123 etc. only, no fancy graphics or funny characters). See the tip 'Prints charming' for the procedure.

Line up

I have seen LocoScript documents with quite complex line diagrams in them – but I'm not sure how they were achieved. Can you explain in simple terms please – I have only just bought my PCW!

F Wheeler, Hull, E Yorks

8000 Plus: If you have a PCW8512 or 8256, or a dot matrix printer on your PCW9512, you can use LocoScript to draw simple line diagrams such as electrical bonding diagrams.

Perhaps the easiest way to show you what you can (and can't quite) get is by example. See the screen shots and printouts. Note that:

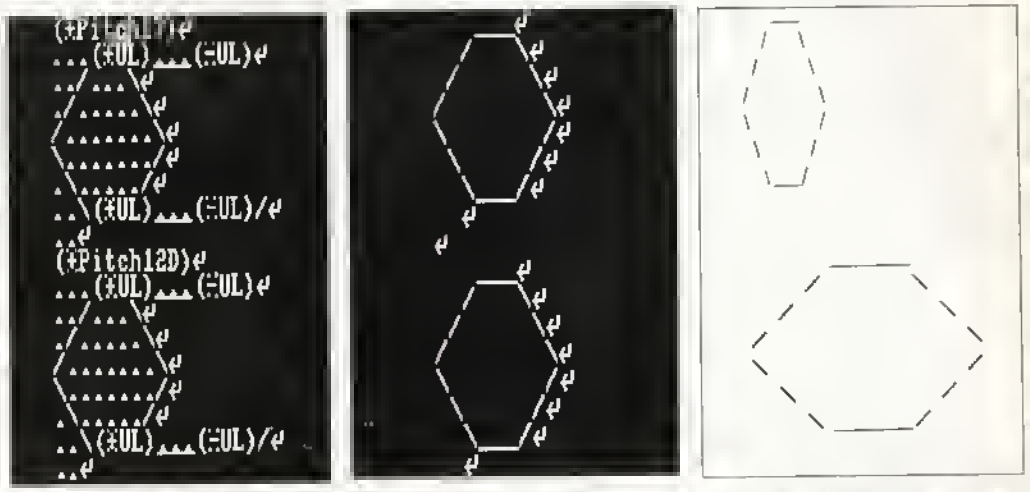
1. The characters /, | and \ can be in any of eight different pitches ([+]P followed by 10, 12, 15, 17, 10D, 12D, 15D and 17D, where D means double width), half height and full height. Each different pitch produces strokes at a different angle to the horizontal. You can't get them to join up though.

2. If you work in half line spacing ([+]LS1/2) and a double width pitch, you can put in "half spaces" which are the normal pitch size. For example, inserting a space of pitch 12 in a 12D pitch diagram gives you effectively a half space. This can enable to you to make perfect angled lines: see the screen shots and printouts for details.

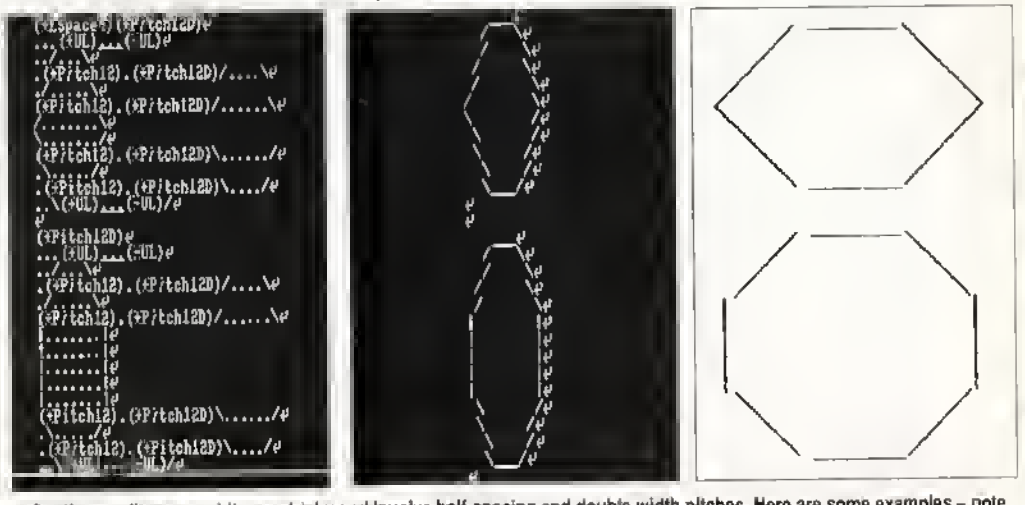
3. Unfortunately you can't get lines to join up very well – the box, for example, looks a bit ragged round the edges. To get the vertical line, enter the | character which is [EXTRA]§ (it actually occurs as a separate key on the 9512) and reduce the line spacing to 1/2 with [+]LS1/2. For horizontal lines use [+]UL.

What you see on the screen is not what you get on the paper, and the LocoScript codes may need to be hidden ([f1] Loco 1, [f8] Loco 2 and deselect 'Codes' with [-]) otherwise everything becomes a confusing mess. You can store regularly used shapes as phrases.

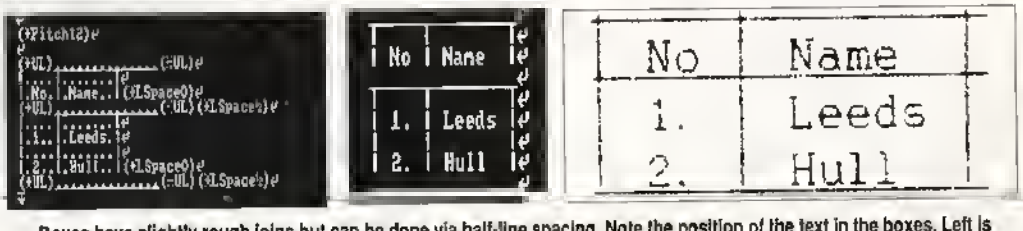
If you have LocoChar (which is an all recent versions of LocoScript 2) you can design your own characters specially for making boxes to make all the joins smooth. Details next month if requested by anyone!



You can easily make broken straight lines in LocoScript to any angle by altering the pitch – note the effect of pitch 17 and pitch 12 double. Left shows an example with the codes and spaces shown; in the middle is the same with the codes and spaces hidden; right is the printout.



Continuous lines are a bit more tricky and involve half-spacing and double width pitches. Here are some examples – note how you can't get lines to join up at the corners. Left is codes and spaces shown, middle codes and spaces not shown, right is the printout



Boxes have slightly rough joins but can be done via half-line spacing. Note the position of the text in the boxes. Left is codes and spaces on; middle is codes and spaces off; right is the printout.

Distinctly Digita

Cleverly written and always favourably reviewed in the press,
Digita produces a range of powerful, low cost software for the home and business user.

DGPAYROLL PLUS

As per DGPayroll, but designed for the larger business with facilities for up to 999 employees.

£79.95

E-TYPE

Do you ever have to print names and addresses at awkward places on envelopes, or do you ever need to fill in tricky forms or invoices where the text has to be in exactly the right place? Usually you have to do it by hand, or get your trusty old typewriter out of the cupboard and dust it off. Well not anymore. The Emulated TYPEwriter transforms your computer and printer into a fully fledged typewriter, supporting bold, underline, italic and other type-styles. Because it can display and print text INSTANTLY you can line up your form, press Return and Space a few times to move to the correct place, and then start typing. Alternatively you can switch to line-by-line mode, which offers word-wrap, justification and proportional spacing, so that you can edit each line before it's printed.

£24.95

PERSONAL TAX PLANNER

Are you absolutely sure your taxman is doing his job correctly? Plan your own tax with ease, this menu-driven program will calculate your income tax liability (4 tax years included) and provide pertinent facts about your tax position. You can perform 'what-if?' calculation to discover ways to minimise your tax liability. In fact, the program will advise you on things such as, if you are a married man, whether it would be advantageous to have your wife's income taxed separately or not. At this price who knows, you will probably find that PTP will pay for itself in tax savings the first time you use it!

** STOP PRESS **
July '89 – PTP user receives tax refund of over £2,000!!

£24.95

SUPERTYPE II

Perhaps the only reasonable criticism of the Amstrad PCW might be the standard of printed output. Upgrade your printer with this clever software utility. The program will provide you with 8 radically different and professional typestyles giving your documents an original facelift. The ingenious thing about Supertype is that once you've established your favourite font on a disc, you won't even notice it working. You run your software in the normal way and everything will be the same except when you print out. Supertype II works with LocoScript (up to version 2.15) and ANY OTHER suitable CP/M software.

£14.95

CLASSIC INVADERS

Escape from executive stress with the classic space invader game

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The complete package designed for the home user.
Contains: Datastore II, Supertype II,
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SPECIAL VALUE COMBO PACK 2

The complete package designed for the business user.
Contains: Datastore II, Supertype II,
Business Controller, DGPayroll **£99.95**

SAVE £65

DGPAYROLL

Designed for the small business and handling payroll problems for up to 20 employees, this program is simple to use being completely menu-driven and supported by comprehensive documentation and worked examples. Suitable for hourly/weekly/fortnightly/4-weekly/monthly paid employees, the program handles all calculations for pay, SSP and SMP, company and private pension schemes (fixed/percentage), payslip printing, printed records/reports and full payroll analysis. Complete user-control of PAYE, NI and SSP rates. You won't find any other program at this price which actually calculates the complicated SSP requirements! Printouts include P45, SSP Leavers, P14, P35, P60 as well as SSP1 (termination) and SSP1 (exclusion) details.

£39.95

BUSINESS CONTROLLER

A complete cashbook accounting system for the sole trader/partnership/limited company. Use the program to assist day-to-day book-keeping and VAT Returns, to compile End of Years Accounts if you wish. This program is simple to use, supported by an excellent manual with tutorial, meets legal requirements and will show the full financial state of your business. In addition to recording cash and bank transactions, the program will allow you to enter credit sales and purchases, and for all of these entries it will automatically complete double entry routines, to ensure your records are always in balance. Simple enough for the beginner, yet sufficiently powerful to grow with your business.

£69.95

DATASTORE II

Looking for fast access to stored information? Want to create customised reports, mailing lists for printing labels, office and personal records with NO technical knowledge? Researched, developed and written exclusively for the Amstrad PCW, this program will fully utilise the facilities of your computer. It makes an ideal partner for the novice or expert. Features include fast searching/sorting, calculation on fields, definable printing templates, ASCII export, 32 fields, 32,000 records, merging files and much more.

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THE GOOD Software FILE

These pages provide a comprehensive guide to the Amstrad PCW software. Published in three monthly parts, this time it's the turn of Databases, Educational Software, Communications and Programming Languages. We've set out to cover avery important piece of sottware we could lay our hands on, and to give you enough information to decide whether they are suitable for you.

All software will run on both the 9512 and the 8000 series machines, though the former's daisywheel printer cannot print graphical output.

The selection isn't comprehensive, but the software listed here represents what we think is the best ot that currently available.

As well as a brief summary of what they do, the main Plus and Minus points for each program are listed – Pluses have a ▲ by them, Minuses a ▼. Those we think are particularly noteworthy have a corner flash.

Have fun window shopping!

DATABASES

There are broadly two different types ot database, and which suits you best depends, of course, on what you want it for.

Firstly there's the simple card index substitute. For many home users, this will be the kind of thing you want – all it does is store your address book or stock items so that you can easily look them up.

A more sophisticated option is the programmable database. With these, in addition to allowing simple card index retrieval there is a command language which allows you to analyse the data on the cards. For example, you could automatically add up the money owed to you by all your customers trom Yorkshire. To make best use of this kind of facility, you will need to be able to understand a little programming, although it's not too hard really.

A bit of jargon now. A database Is said to consist ot records – this is just like a card in a conventional card file, with all someone's details on it. Each record Is composed of fields – a tield is a single entry on a card, like someone's name, or age, or postcode.

The thing that makes a database special is an index. You might be able to hold your address book as a simple list in a word processor document, but if it gets large then this becomes unwieldy. An index means that the database has worked out which order records should be in, so it can go straight to the one you want without looking at lots of others first.

The field that you use as your index (e.g. someone's surname) is said to be a key field, and can be looked up very fast compared to "non-key" tields. A good database will allow multiple keys, meaning that it can look up data just as tast for a variety of types of information.

MASTERFILE 8000

£49.95 • Campbell Systems • 0378 77762/3

A specially written PCW version ol the successful database sold on other Amstrad computers. It Is lully menu controlled, and makes good use ol the PCWs speciel screen and keys. It can deal with up to 8 separate data files at once, so can cope with relational databases. Screen (but not printed output) can be elaborately leld out with boxes, lines elc.

PLUSES • MINUSES
- ▲ Works last
- ▲ Wide range of Layout optrons
- ▲ Handles 'relational' lles
- ▲ Plenty ol good example files
- ▲ Can do arithmetic calculations wilhin its records
- ▼ Capacity limited by size ol M drive – best on an 8512
- ▼ Takes a while to learn all the leatures

AT LAST PLUS

£39.95 • Rational Solutions • 0566 81511

Al Last Plus Is a lull-leatured database lhat Is excellent value lor money. It does what Cardbox did, with much better reporting lacilities, and can sort too. You can do simple totalling ol columns, but not general erithmetic on fields in a record. A good general purpose database.

PLUSES • MINUSES
- ▲ Good screen editing lacilities
- ▲ Constants ensble insertion ol repetitive data
- ▲ Good on storage space - ideal for 8256 owners
- ▲ Handles names and addresses well
- ▼ No arithmelic calculation In fiels
- ▼ Setting up tho database Is at first confusing
- ▼ Good, but not that good

CAMBASE II

£49.95 • Cambrian Software • 0766 831878

New version ol the old lavourite PCW database. Most important change is the Copy Filespec tacility. You can set up a new database with potentially more entries than you've made provision lor using lhe information from the original database. You can also change the fields to suit another set-up.

PLUSES • MINUSES
- ▲ Quick end efficient to use
- ▲ You can sel up a database blueprint (Filespec) which yon can lest lhoroughly before entering date
- ▲ Includes powerful leatnres like conditionals, loops, field validation, and specified layouts
- ▲ Simple parts ol the program are well covered in the manual
- ▼ Can't use the memory bed news for 8256 users
- ▼ Yon have lo gness how to nse lhe more advenced leatnres
- ▼ Nol much room lor prompts
- ▼ Tendency lo crash occasionally in Filespec

LOCOFILE

£29.95 • Locomotive • 0306 740606

The Indexed pop-up database that runs from within LocoScript 2 and thet goes even further toward turning LocoScript 2 Into a completely Integreted software package. Unlike most databases empty records take up almost no space on disc. This allows large record cards to be defined even lf they won't always be used. Records pop up very quickly without heving to exll from your document. Works best when used In conjunction with LocoMail.

PLUSES • MINUSES
- ▲ Very easy lo use
- ▲ Unnsually efficient use ol disc spece
- ▲ Can alter existing index - e very powerful leature indeed
- ▲ Automatically upgrades your LocoScript, LocoMail end LocoSpell to version 2.2
- ▲ Sample dalabsses help you gal e better leel lor the program
- ▲ Very llexible when designed the record format
- ▲ Carries out ssarches on partial strings - ideel for when dealing with Incomplele Inlormallon

CHIBASE 3.0

£29.95 • Chiasma • 06333 60996

The updated version of the 'free format' database. You type In the text, mark the words to be Indexed end treet the file as a database. The updated version allows you to Import end export ASCII dale files and e chain delete option enables you to work your way methodically through the database deleting the records you don't went while keeping those that you do.

PLUSES • MINUSES
- ▲ Good smend, sort end recall lsatures
- ▲ Yon can edll wilhoul a word processor
- ▲ Searches quickly through data
- ▲ Greal lor storing large amounts ol dsle where lhe snbject matter Is variable
- ▲ Uselul record lemplste
- ▼ Can't rnn lrom M drive

DATASTORE II

£39.95 • Digita International • 0395 270273

Ideal for the novice, Detastore II allows you to remove the tedium from filing, updating and organising Information. 32000 records, 32 fields, lasl seerch' lacilty. Function keys can have phrases assigned to them. Good for uses where the emphesis Is on printed output.

PLUSES • MINUSES
- ▲ Flexible renge ol prinl commands
- ▲ Simple lo use
- ▲ Calcnlation lacilities
- ▼ Need lo presel maximnm no. of records belore yon start
- ▼ Slow al browsing through

DELTA

£99.99 • Compsoft • 04868 25925

Delta is another ol the heavyweights, like dBase II and Condor, but unlike them Is fully menu driven. Allhough the screen layouts ere fully flexible, there Is a delault 'quick' layout so you don't have to sweat at defining your own. It could use better record Indexing lacilties. Particularly good for writing applications, once you have ploughed through the large menuel.

PLUSES • MINUSES
- ▲ Records can contain up lo 90 fields, plus groups ol fields lhat may be repeated
- ▲ Screen layonl can be user defined, or 'quick' mode nsed
- ▲ Single page letter writer provides detailed mail merge
- ▲ Processes can be delined, and run lrom nser defined menus, lor ease ol use by others
- ▲ Very lull, end quite readsble, mannal
- ▼ Only one field may be used lor Indexing
- ▼ Very big program – e PCW8256 would be hard pushed

▼ Some of the menu operations are unforgiving to errors

MINI OFFICE PROFESSIONAL PLUS

£39.95 • Database Software • 0625 878888

The Mini Office database retains its original format. It's a pretty standard card index type, similar to First Base. Good range of selection operations and arithmetic on fields. Can sort over a combination of fields and print out a variety of smart layouts, and you can have up to 255 fields. No import or export of data.

PLUSES • MINUSES
- ▲ Easy to use and intuitive
- ▲ Can use the data in the word processor
- ▲ Powerful selection and sort facilities
- ▲ Arithmetic on fields
- ▲ Test print facility lets you check your labels will print okay
- ▲ One command makes global changes
- ▼ Can't import or export data

POCKET INFOSTAR

£69.50 • MicroPro/DRA • 0386 841181

Consists of two large programs, DataStar and ReportStar (both available independently). DataStar is a conventional database, with screen card layout and indexing. ReportStar then generates the printed output, either from DataStar or CalcStar files. Powerful if you can use them, but the suite is horrifically overcomplicated, and the documentation just incomprehensible.

PLUSES • MINUSES
- ▲ DataStar is a quite good database with indexing and calculated fields.
- ▲ "Transaction processing" feature allows cross relationing of data files.
- ▲ Can be integrated with other Pocket products, eg WordStar.
- ▲ Can take up to 255 fields per record
- ▼ Two volume manual set is very badly organised.
- ▼ There are separate programs to run for form design, data entry and reporting.
- ▼ Operation is all by obscure command keys, à la WordStar.

DBASE II

£99.00 • Ashton Tate/First Software • 07357 5244

The WordStar of database packages. Recently licensed "cheaply" for Amstrad machines, dBase II is a market leader in business computing. As you would expect, this means it is very powerful but very complex. It has a procedure language to allow you to write programs to manipulate the data, and you can construct index files for really fast access to large databases. If you can make the effort to learn it, it'll serve you well.

PLUSES • MINUSES
- ▲ Powerful command language for customised programs
- ▲ Indexing fecilly makes large databases fast to handle
- ▲ Can handle very big databases
- ▲ The data can be fairly easily altered after its entry
- ▼ Manual is daunting (but there are plenty of independent books on the market)
- ▼ Can't easily alter the screen record layout
- ▼ For an expensive package, you still only get 32 fields per record
- ▼ Generally unfriendly unless you have some programming skills

FIRST BASE

£29.95 • Minerva • 0392 437756

Billed as a simple database for the first time user, First Base is quite a competent cheap card index. The manual is computer printed, and weak on diagrams which doesn't help things. One weakness is getting printed results out of First Base – either you settle for crude lists, or you have to create a template in LocoScript which is awkward to do. But overall, it's pretty good value for money.

PLUSES • MINUSES
- ▲ Can alter the index field at any time
- ▲ Simple to use screen editing make data entry easy
- ▲ Good value as a simple card index lookup system
- ▲ Can easily browse through the database picking out a set by hand
- ▼ Manual is badly laid out and generally difficult
- ▼ Producing printed output is awkward

SAGESOFT RETRIEVE

£70 • Sagesoft • 091 2131555

A high-power package that is relatively easy to use with password security if desired, calculations, automatic counting or deletion of sets of records satisfying given conditions. It also has sophisticated sort and select commands, and can change the structure of an existing database. All this is done by a set of commands rather like a programming language. Printed formats are rather limited though and the program insists on using both drives, making use on an 8256 impractical.

PLUSES • MINUSES
- ▲ Easy to use for a powerful package
- ▲ Advanced sorting and selection commands
- ▲ Subsets can be written to files
- ▲ Can count or delete subsets with one command
- ▲ Labelling/mailmerging routines included
- ▲ Can change structure of existing database
- ▼ Impossibly big program for 8256
- ▼ Printed output limited – must use mailmerge

SCRIPT2BASE/TEXT2BASE

£29.95 each Encyclasoft 0270 811890

Two free-form databases to be used with LocoScript and Protext respectively. Complete rewrites of FT=DB, the beauty of these databases is that you first create all your text on the word processor and import it as an ordinary (non-ASCII) text file into the database. You then mark all the words you want to see indexed as keywords so that you can go on to compile indexes and carry out searches.

PLUSES • MINUSES
- ▲ Very easy to use
- ▲ Allows you to organise your collection of discs like an encyclopaedia
- ▲ Can construct new files made up of selected parts of existing ones
- ▲ Can send any part of a document to the printer on a line-by-line basis
- ▼ No text-editing facilities within the databases themselves
- ▼ Dreadful documentation

SMARTCARD

£59.95 • Focus Computers • 0272 420109

A conventional card index database which is now the nearest thing available to Cardbox. Small and fast, you can sort the records, index up to three fields and do simple arithmetic in fields. Can't put background text (eg. titles) on records or printouts.

PLUSES • MINUSES
- ▲ Good clear screens
- ▲ Plenty of on screen help
- ▲ Fast and high capacity
- ▲ Easy to use
- ▼ Can't put background text on printed reports
- ▼ No way of exporting data for mailmerge

MAGIC FILER

£69.95 • Sagesoft • 091 2131555

Magic Filer is not a true database, but is a structured filing system. Information is split into a hierarchy of categories, and tagged with a keyword which is not stored as part of the data. You can browse through the data, but it will get tedious if you find it needs updating regularly. Many applications will find Magic Filer restrictive.

PLUSES • MINUSES
- ▲ Good for browsing through data when you don't really know what's there
- ▲ Data can be declared 'read only' to protect it from alteration by other browsers
- ▼ The basic filing system is weird but not wonderful
- ▼ Editing data once in Magic Filer is awkward
- ▼ The documentation is far too brief
- ▼ You can only have one database per disc

MICROFILE (SOLO IN THE MICRO COLLECTION)

£49.95 • Saxon Computing • 0401 50697

Microfile is a well implemented simple database, driven by plenty of menus and on-screen prompts. It's fast and has good screen control, although it has some size restrictions. Microfile comes as part of a software suite, "The Micro Collection", which is good value (Microfile, Microwrite, MicroSpread, Flexilabel and Lock-It)

PLUSES • MINUSES
- ▲ The price includes competent word processing, spread sheet, labelling and encryption programs
- ▲ Plenty of menus and on screen prompting
- ▲ Very flexible formatting for screen layout and printing
- ▲ Numeric fields can be expressions to be calculated
- ▲ Indexing is fast and can be on several fields
- ▼ Maximum number of fields per record is only 20
- ▼ Limited facilities for totalling up fields in a database

EDUCATIONAL

Educational Software is designed as an aid to traditional teaching, not an alternative. Its main use is in re-inforcing traditional learning done elsewhere and providing the stimulus of a different approach. It can also be especially useful in rote learning and improving the speed at which problems can be solved.

BUSINESS FRENCH (GERMAN/ITALIAN/SPANISH)

£49.95 each • Apex Computing Services • 0273 727477

Four language learning packages which enable the Euro-conscious professional to get to grips with commercial jargon in another tongue. Areas covered are business, technical, travel, restaurants, communications and social – all with seperate subsections to ensure that every eventuality is covered. A basic knowledge of the language concerned is, however, essential.

PLUSES • MINUSES
- ▲ Fun and easy to use
- ▲ Comprehensive range of vocabulary
- ▼ Program needs cassettes to be really good
- ▼ Some poor screen displays

IANKEY CRASH COURSE

£24.95 • Iansyst • 071 607 0187

A fairly traditional typing tutor, taking you through basic keyboard exercises. There's a lot of explanatory text, which gets in the way second time around. Definitely competent, but a bit boring.

PLUSES • MINUSES
- ▲ Mostly avoids boring letter drills
- ▲ Very full on-screen information guides you along
- ▲ "Fast" option cuts out some text if it gets repetitive
- ▼ Not particularly imaginative use of graphics
- ▼ It doesn't always ensure that the cursor is properly aligned with the exercise text

2 FINGERS TOUCH TYPING

£24.95 • Iansyst • 071 607 0187

Despite its provocative name, a useful typing tutor in that it specifically caters for people who can already get by on keyboards with two fingers. You are gradually introduced to touch typing, so your speed doesn't drop while you learn. Fills a necessary slot in the Typing Tutor market.

PLUSES • MINUSES
- ▲ Suitable for improving two finger typists without much drop in speed
- ▲ Full on screen instructions
- ▲ Exercise material is interesting text, not letter drills
- ▼ Explanation text is annoyingly verbose in some lessons
- ▼ It doesn't always ensure that the cursor is properly aligned with the exercise text

GIANTKILLER

£14.95 • Topologika • 0733 244682

A mathematics adventure game loosely based on Jack and the Beanstalk. Lots of intriguing puzzles which should stimulate any student up to GCSE standard. Not the best adventure game ever written but great for making mathematics fun!

PLUSES • MINUSES
- ▲ Puzzles plausibly integrated into scenario
- ▲ Progression of game is simple and well defined
- ▲ Puzzles introduce a lot of valid mathematics
- ▼ Program understands only very simple commands
- ▼ Saving a position takes a move – can be fatal
- ▼ Won't be of particular help in exams

ANIMAL VEGETABLE MINERAL WORLD WISE

£14.95 each • Bourne Educational • 0794 523301

Aimed at the younger market, 7-15 year olds. Both these programs work by learning as the child uses them. Think of an object and the computer tries to guess it. If it is wrong, the child is asked for a question which would allow the PCW to be right next time, and it learns.

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PLUSES · MINUSES
▲ Can be used as many times as the child's imagination holds out
▲ Performance can be analysed by a teacher after a session
▲ As you build up a base of objects and questions, they can be saved for reuse
▼ It needs a lot of typing, hence a lot of supervision
▼ The PCW starts with only two objects known , so it takes time to get going
▼ Documentation has hardly been altered from cassette based versions
▼ Since it is for young children, more imaginative use of the screen would be nice

BETTER SPELLING

£16.95 • School Software Ltd • 010 353 61 45399

This is a spelling course aimed at the 8 to adult age group. It consists of a series of well organised, short lessons each dealing with one topic, like plurals or which version of there /their/they're to use in a sentence. The use of the PCW screen is rather unimaginative, and doesn't hold your attention.

PLUSES · MINUSES
▲ Well thought out lessons to emphasise particular points
▲ Teaches words in a sentence context as well as in isolation
▲ Lessons can be picked in any order from a menu
▲ Seems to be proof against mischievous key pressing
▼ Boring use of the screen doesn't grab interest
▼ No instructions come as to how to use the program.

CHEMISTRY/BIOLOGY

£22.95 each • School Software • 010 353 61 45399

These two are fairly traditional question-and-answer tests. You are faced with a choice of 10 topics, and then asked 10 or so questions each, where you have to fill in the blank in a statement. There are preamble notes beforehand, and if you get it wrong you are given a clue. Aimed at 12-16 year olds.

PLUSES · MINUSES
▲ Questions would challenge a GCSE pupil well
▲ Preamble notes introduce topics
▼ The fill in the blank questioning style has little flexibility for different answers
▼ No option to add questions for a specialised syllabus
▼ Some careless errors, like incorrect facts and hard to decipher chemical formulae

MICRO MATHS

£24.95 • LCL • 0491 579345

Supposedly covering 8 to adult ages, this seems an O-level type program, covering topics from calculus to tables. A good implementation on the PCW with proper use of the screen. Questions are picked at random from a pool, so may repeat but never run out. Replies to questions are typed in mathematical notation, like X^2+3

PLUSES · MINUSES
▲ You can pause to use BASIC as a calculator while you think
▲ 'Unlimited' question set
▲ Comes with a 'free' book of AEB O level questions
▲ Good hints and explanations
▼ Questions in a topic repeat occasionally
▼ Some frills, like the clock and beeper, are annoying
▼ No flexibility to add questions for a particular syllabus

AMSTAT 1,2,3,4,6 AND 7

£28 - £40 • SC Coleman Ltd • 0530 415919

A suite of six statistical routines including a business analysis program, forecasting and resource management. Individual prices range from £27.95 to £39.95. Very sophisticated, and perhaps because of that, a little awkward for beginners.

PLUSES · MINUSES
▲ Good range of statistical functions
▲ Good manual
▲ Can produce good quality graphical results
▼ Some editing procedures very long winded
▼ Needs some expertise to use properly
▼ Weak on checking that input data is reasonable.

YES CHANCELLOR!

£14.95 • Topologika • 0733 244682

Wait! Don't skip over Yes Chancellor because it calls itself an 'economic simulation' program. Instructive and fun to use, you type in your annual budgets (tax rates, public spending etc.) and see your popularity plunge and the economy crash. Great for economics classes, also an amusing game in itself.

PLUSES · MINUSES
▲ Simple but effective model of the economy
▲ Comes with booklet explaining economic principles
▲ Great for teaching economic and political pragmatism!
▼ Can get boring as a game
▼ You can't adjust the model of the economy, so it can be too simple

ULTIMATE QUIZ

£14.95 • David Greenhough Computing • 0274 640764

An educational aid for school age children. Two quizzes on a multiple choice format are available on the one disc - one on general knowledge and one on the Highway Code. You can play against a timer and can set the level of difficulty.

PLUSES · MINUSES
▲ Optional noughts and crosses game included with either quizz
▲ Incorporates an editing file for easy updating of questions
▲ It's very versatile - up to 8 people can play
▲ None of the questions are repeated
▼ Some of the questions are a little esoteric

SUPERMATHS

£16.95 • Abacus Software • 0689 36293

Specifically designed for the PCW, this program exercises basic numeracy skills in children. Questions are asked in quick fire volleys of ten and cover all four operations (addition, subtraction, multiplication and so on). Scores are automatically recorded.

PLUSES · MINUSES
▲ Special original Test and Worksheet modes included the latter is ideal for teachers
▲ Very efficient scoring method
▲ Numeracy level is very basic
▲ New version has enhanced screen displays
▼ Some of the questions may start to look familiar after a while

LANGUAGE TUTORS

£19.95 each • Kosmos Software • 05255 3942/5406

Four programs with identical formats to help you learn French, Italian, Spanish and German. They can be used just as effectively by students of those languages learning English too. Very versatile series of programs and useful adjuncts to conventional language learning.

PLUSES · MINUSES
▲ Can edit the lessons yourself to include new words
▲ Useful self test option
▲ Completely bi lingual packages
▼ Purely for vocabulary learning no grammar lessons
▼ Would have been more useful if they had also included audio cassettes

MATHS MANIA

£16.95 • School Software Ltd • 010 353 61 45399

For children between the ages of 8 and 12, this program offers 5 levels of difficulty in multiplication and 2 in division. A very good program for exercising basic numeracy skills and for practising some mental arithmetic.

PLUSES · MINUSES
▲ Program provides a chirpy feedback on the score of the user
▲ Large attractive numbers appear on the screen
▼ Surprisingly enough, no addition or subtraction exercises are provided
▼ Screens could be made more visually exciting for the younger users

BETTER MATHS

£16.95 • School Software Ltd • 010 353 61 45399

A continuation of Maths Mania for the next age group 12 to 16 year olds. Topics are very varied and cover, among others, statistics, simple interest and algebra. Each topic consists of a series of ten multiple choice questions. At the end of each set, the percentage scored is shown.

PLUSES · MINUSES
▲ Realistic level of difficulty practised
▲ Program makes a first class revision aid

COMMUNICATIONS

Communications is one of the glittering areas of computing, gurus would have you believe. It can provide a fascinating hobby for 'hackers', but more importantly it is a valuable business tool.

'Electronic mail' is just what it says: you use your PCW to send messages, which can be documents thousands of words long, to others on the electronic mail system. The best known system of this kind is Telecom Gold, which also allows you to send telexes. Another major system is Prestel, which is more of an information provider – you can read share prices, weather information and other news direct from your phone line.

For any professional service, you pay a registration fee, plus a connection charge – typically around 10p per minute you use the system. Of course, your phone bills are extra. For hobbyists there are also 'Bulletin boards', which are effectively a kind of private electronic mail system run by a system operator (a 'sysop' to those in the know).

To use any service, you will need to buy a modem and an interface. A modem allows you to send computer signals down a phone line, and the interface gets the signals from your PCW to your modem. The pair will set you back £200 or more. Once done, you need some software to allow you to send and receive data, and it is this software reviewed below.

Electronic mail services just send strings of characters to and fro, whereas Prestel is a 'Viewdata' system, meaning it sends pictures and graphics too. Software needs to do more to receive Viewdata graphics, so if you want to use Prestel make sure your software is up to it.

8256UKM7.COM

Public domain (ie. free!)

P.D. software documentation is often poor but this program has an above average document file. UKM7 was written to support ASCII file transfers using error correction and as a dumb terminal either for use over the phone or between two Amstrads. Between two PCW's file transfer is possible at a staggering 31,250 baud which is even faster than PIP! Easy to use for beginners and better than KERMIT, UKM7 provides a cheap and excellent way to communications after you've got fed up with the PCW's MAIL232. 8256UKM7 is available from the Public Domain Special Interest Group, or most bulletin boards supporting the PCW machines.

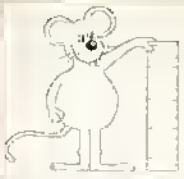
PLUSES · MINUSES
▲ Cheap! (the price of a phone call)
▲ Easy to use, and helpful menus
▼ Modem7 version of Xmodem error checking supported
▼ Single file and Batch Mode transfers
▼ "Quiet" mode for slightly faster transfers (on-line transfer progress report disabled)
▼ Only ASCII, no Viewdata
▼ You need to find a PD software source (eg. use a modem and MAIL232 software)

MINI OFFICE PROFESSIONAL PLUS

£39.95 • Database Software • 0625 878888

The comms package is as comprehensive as anything else on the market. It can display both ordinary text screens and the 'Viewdata' block graphics used by Prestel. You are offered baud rates from 75 to 9600, separately set for transmit and receive, straight terminal emulation for use with Telecom Gold, and XMODEM and KERMIT file transfer protocols for error-proof transfer of long files. Would be well worth the money just by itself – and of course you're getting four other very good programs as well.

PLUSES · MINUSES
▲ Very comprehensive – a genuinely useful comms package
▲ Ordinary text and 'Viewdata' block graphics
▲ Can save setups under names and recall them, so you only need work out your baud rates/parities once
▲ You can set keys to return strings, such as Telecom Gold passwords
▲ Comes preconfigured to use Prestel and Telecom Gold



Three Inch Software

194 Amyand Park Road, Twickenham, TW1 3HY

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LEISURE SOFTWARE

The planet Dioonawangara (Doom, for short) appears to be dying...and only you can save it! In Part 3 of our best-selling sci-fi *Doom Trilogy* you'll question your system of ethics, discover the purpose of the artefacts and why volcanoes can exist so close to glaciers. Accompanied by your trusty robot dog you'll have to deal with squished spaceships, renegade robots, slow beings, time travel...in fact a whole host of original Killworth puzzles after which you'll never be the same again. Pack includes free *ROBOT DOG CONSTRUCTION KIT* and a monster FREE game: *HEZARIN!* PCW 8256, 8512, 9512, CPC (disc), IBM PC £10.95 plus £1.00 P&P

So you think you could run the economy better than the Chancellor? Our *Major* economy simulation game YES CHANCELLOR! gives you the chance to try! Based on a simplified but in principle correct model of the problems of raising and using money, YES CHANCELLOR allows you to try to control inflation, taxation, interest rates, social services, strikes, wage claims, foreign trade, etc. The object of the game is to help your party stay in power by winning an election every five years; manage it for fifteen and you'll retire with a Life Peerage! One of 8000 Plus's recommended programs, YES CHANCELLOR is written in Basic so that you can explore how the program works. *PCW 8256, 8512, 9512, CPC (disc or tape) £14.95 IBM PC £17.50*
Please add £1.00 P&P

GIANT KILLER is a mathematical adventure game which is used in thousands of British and Australian schools and is another 8000 Plus BEST BUY. As Jack - or Jackie - your task is to go to market to buy a pig. You'll be lucky to get one, of course, but if you can handle a calculator and map a maze you'll end up with a magic bean. Plant it and the rest of the adventure opens up. Puzzles gradually increase in difficulty covering National Curriculum investigations such as tessellations, prime numbers, topology, time and space, logic, etc. A great way to give your kids (and yourself) a maths challenge! Suits ages 10 to GCSE. *PCW 8256, 8512, 9512, CPC (disc)* £14.95, IBM PC £17.50

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PLUSES • MINUSES
- ▲ Good, clear documentation
- ▲ Easy for first timers to nse
- ▲ Built in text editor for pre-sending message preparation
- ▲ Pre-delinable tasks executable el any preset time if unattended.
- ▼ No error corrected file transfer (i.e. Xmodem or CRC)

DIALUP

£89.99 • PMS Communications • 021-643 7688

Offers both E-mail and Viewdata operations. Very easy to use, and offers an XMODEM transfer protocol unlike Sage ChitChat. If you are buying a modem too there are some cut-price bundled deals to be had, eg. the Miracle Technology WS4000 modem.

PLUSES • MINUSES
- ▲ Simple to use
- ▲ Comprehensive file transfer commands, including XMODEM and the increasingly popular KERMIT
- ▲ Runs from the M drive
- ▼ Manual is not PCW specific, and the references to 5.25" discs are tedious

COMM+

£86.25 • NewStar • 0245 265017

This single package combines both ASCII and full Viewdata block graphics and Telesoftware downloading. A very powerful command language allows you to look for particular messages coming in and take actions, even while doing other things. Its use is only limited by your programming ability.

PLUSES • MINUSES
- ▲ Very comprehensive and well indexed ringbound manual
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- ▲ Telesoftware downloading facility, with CRC/Xmodem checking
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- ▼ Not recommended for absolute beginners to communications

PROGRAMMING

Programming languages come as either 'compilers' or 'interpreters' – compilers pre process the program into machine code, so are much faster. The PCW's standard Mallard BASIC and LOGO are both interpreters. Compilers are generally more cumbersome to use than interpreters, but have various benefits for serious programmers.

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£9.95 (£5 to RNLI) • Luxlan Software • 0726 850820

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PLUSES • MINUSES
- ▲ Uses of LocoScript keys
- ▲ Easy to use
- ▲ Loads of features
- ▼ Documentation poor

HISOFT C

£39.95 • HiSoft • 0525 718181

A very good C compiler, fast, produces good compact code. It comes complete with the HiSoft integrated text editor ED80.

PLUSES • MINUSES
- ▲ Compiles program into ordinary CPM .COM file
- ▲ Produces compact code
- ▲ Fast and inexpensive
- ▲ Comes with integrated text editor
- ▼ No floating point arithmetic

ARNOR C

£49.95 • Arnor • 0733 68909

Good compiler with floating point arithmetic, but not as fast or as cheap as HiSoft C.

PLUSES • MINUSES
- ▲ Excellent integrated text editor
- ▲ Floating point arithmetic
- ▼ Cumbersome to produce .COM files, needs special run time support program
- ▼ HiSoft C is faster and cheaper

MIX C

£29.95 • Advantage • 0242 224340

American C compiler. You can buy a full screen editor with it for £19.95 extra. Also machine code assembler & examples for £8.95 each.

PLUSES • MINUSES
- ▲ Features an excellent C tutorial
- ▲ Comprehensive implementation and massive manual
- ▼ Not for the newcomer to programming

PASCAL 80

£39.95 • Hisoft • 0525 718181

A standard full Pascal compiler that produces compact code. Comes with the ED80 text editor and a stand alone programmers editor.

PLUSES • MINUSES
- ▲ Well integrated text editor – when you hit a compilation error you are returned to the correct point to edit it
- ▲ Short compilation time, economical on memory
- ▼ Manual makes no attempt to teach you Pascal

HISOFT FORTH

£19.95 • Hisoft • 0525 718181

Forth is an unusual language, somewhere between assembler and C. This is one of the few compilers available for the PCW.

PLUSES • MINUSES
- ▲ Comes with a Forth editor
- ▲ Quick and efficient implementation
- ▼ Manual doesn't teach you Forth

THE VICAR

£49 • Iansyst • 071-607 5844

A programming tool for serious programmers. If you have a several-hundred line program held in several files on a disc, you can lose track of which variables are used where. The VICAR produces a concordance listing and other diagnostics, to help you find bugs and maintain the program.

PLUSES • MINUSES
- ▲ Easy to use but still flexible through use of options
- ▲ Amstrad versions all at a special low price
- ▲ Good manual
- ▼ Only of value on large programs
- ▼ Limited value to most PCW users (except BASIC buffs)

MODULA 2

£45.00 • Hisoft • 0525 718181

A compiler. Modula-2 is the successor to Pascal, good for large programs requiring separate compilation, complete with text editor.

PLUSES • MINUSES
- ▲ Full implementation with extensions.
- ▲ Includes libraries of predefined modules
- ▲ WordStar type screen editor included
- ▼ Compilation process is longwinded and not for beginners

CBASIC

£45.00 • Digital Research • 0635 35304

The original Basic compiler from Digital Research, and still one of the best for anyone wanting to produce COM files without abandoning their investment in Basic.

PLUSES • MINUSES
- ▲ Easier programming tool than conventional interpreter
- ▲ Very similar to Mallard Basic, so easy to learn
- ▼ No text editor – you need to buy a programmer's editor such as ED80, or the public domain VDO25
- ▼ Programs don't necessarily work faster than they would in conventional Basic, sometimes slower

ALL YOU EVER ...

£24.95 • CP Software • 0993 823463

Program is ridiculously entitled All You Ever Wanted To Know About Graphics, the Universe and Everything on the PCW 8256/8512 but were Afraid to Ask. It's for the experienced programmer who needs fast, smoothly flowing and professional looking graphics output. It has a library of machine code routines which you can use in any language from Mallard Basic to machine code.

PLUSES • MINUSES
- ▲ You can produce professional standard graphics
- ▲ Demo programs included on the disc
- ▲ Routines are very wide ranging
- ▲ Excellent value for money
- ▲ New routines of latest version concerned with printer control
- ▼ Not recommended for beginners
- ▼ Cumbersome to use from Basic

PASCAL/MT

£45 Digital Research 0635 53499

A full implementation of ISO standard DPS/7185 Pascal with a number of extremely powerful additions. Is very good for large complex applications both data processing and system control.

PLUSES • MINUSES
- ▲ A very powerful tool for the serious software writer
- ▲ Unlimited program size with modular development and use of overlays
- ▲ Built in assembler
- ▲ Improved string handling (over standard Pascal)
- ▲ Choice of BCD real numbers for commercial/financial use
- ▼ No built in text editor
- ▼ Compiler in general and the manual in particular are not for beginners
- ▼ No graphics

DEVPAC 80 MKII

£49.95 Hisoft 0525 718181

Version 2 of the PCW hacker's first choice of development system. Substantially upgraded from the original with a new quite powerful debugger, and a Mini Officelstyle main menu from which to run the individual utilities or your own finished programs.

PLUSES • MINUSES
- ▲ Powerful assembler producing REL or COM files
- ▲ Good hex facility for Basic programmers
- ▼ Text editor antiquated and clumsy
- ▼ Weak monitor

NEXT MONTH

The guide continues with the categories of SPREADSHEETS GRAPHICS and GAMES. The month after will cover WORD PROCESSORS, ACCOUNTS, UTILITIES and DTP, and the month after that it's back to this month's topics. Our intention is to keep publishing the three parts of the guide in rotation, updating it each month to include all new products. If you would like to see other sections of the guide, back issues of 8000 Plus are available at £1.75 each. Meanwhile, if you are aware of any significant errors or omissions in the file as published, please let us know. We intend to maintain it as THE authoritative guide to PCW software.

1

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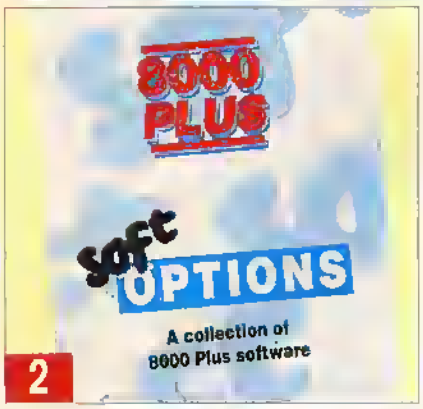

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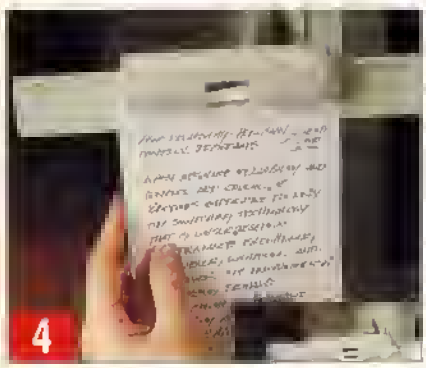
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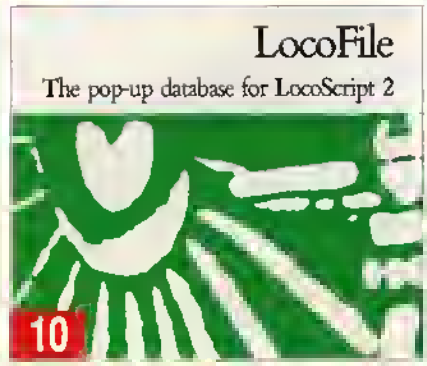

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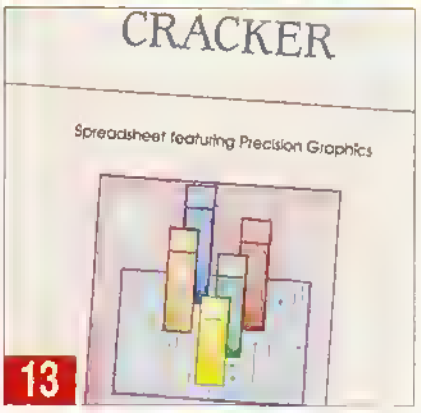

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POSTSCRIPT

It's readers' corner; welcome to the pages in which you have your say.

JThis month we're going to answering your questions concerning memory upgrades, external 3.5 inch drives, aluminium foil and foreign daisywheels. There's the odd sexist dig in there too. So if you want to contribute your thoughts to the state of PCW-dom in general, please continue to send your letters to Postscript, 8000 Plus, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW.

Missing address mark

I am seeking to get in touch with The Electric Studio, but a recent letter of mine addressed to them has been returned by the Post Office with the comment "gone away".

I am having trouble with a Light pen and Graphics Program which I purchased from them some years back, and am now wondering whether they have moved to another address – have been taken over by another organization – or have simply gone out of business.

I do not think you have carried any advertising under the name The Electric Studio for a long time, but if you are able to offer me any assistance in tracing the organization I should be very grateful.

D H O John
Brentwood, Essex

8000 Plus: *Although The Electric Studio – creators of Newsdesk International and the Lightpen – are now more active in the PC DTP market, you can nevertheless write to them or phone them with your problem. Their new address is 8 The Cam Centre, Wilbury Way, Hitchin, Herts SG4 OTW. Their 'phone number is 0462 420222. They said that they would be only too pleased to help you out.*

Follow that program!

I find my PCW great in helping me run my taxi business, for accounts and invoices etc. My friend recently showed me a program called autoroute which is for his Atari ST. I wondered if there is a similar program available for my computer, giving various routes and time estimates from A to B.

S C Arnold
Wokingham, Berkshire

8000 Plus: *Even as I write this, Bill Weeks of Cavalier Software (PO Box 32, London SE15 2HS) is just releasing a piece of vertical software for all PCW owners called Taxi Cab. It costs £134.99 incl. VAT; we hope to review it in next month's issue. Either stay tuned or call him on 071 639 6683 for further information.*

Pick a daisy

I have a 9512. The printer has broken down. I think it best to buy a new one. Your last review of printers generally was I think January 1988... though you did one later on dot matrix printers. I prefer a daisy wheel. Your recomendation of the Panasonic KX-P3131U is fine but I can't find it listed now.

Problem: what is my best bet for a replacement of the 9512's printer?

I have no intention of upgrading to anything better than the 9512. Should I buy an Amstrad replacement printer the same as I have now? Or would you recommend any other?

It would greatly help me if you could give a quick reply – since I have to do a monthly column for a magazine. I realise this could be asking too much. (I was once an editor myself).

Murray Wren
Blackheath Park, London

8000 Plus: *Not at all. I'm afraid Panasonic discontinued production of the KX-P3131U about two and a half years ago. In fact, they no longer manufacture daisy wheel printers at all these days, preferring to concentrate on the laser and dot matrix markets. That being the case, we would recommend that you stay with your native 9512 daisywheel.*

The only snag is that you can't buy just a replacement printer: you can either buy a complete new 9512 package (which is, obviously, a stupid idea) or you can buy the replacement parts for your existing, 'broken down' printer. You don't say what's wrong with it. But a company called CPC Sparrs (PO Box 158, Preston, Lancashire (0772 555034)) will be able to provide you with new replacement components. Alternatively, just take your daisywheel to a repair house to have it fixed. Either of these alternatives is going to be cheaper than buying a brand new 'foreign' daisywheel printer.

Poles apart?

I have an Amstrad PCW 9512 with standard keyboard and daisywheel printer. In addition to word processing in English, I need to be able to produce output in the Polish language.

I have phoned several mail order businesses advertising in "8000 Plus" together with Amstrad spares division, Amsoft and Locomotive Software. None can say definitely that a Polish language daisywheel does not exist, only that they do not know of one.

Have you encountered such a daisywheel or would I need to invest in a dot matrix printer? Many thanks for your assistance.

Mr G L Neville
Camberley, Surrey

8000 Plus: *It's bad news I'm afraid, Mr Neville. We've spoken to two foreign daisywheel stockists who have everything but. They've informed us that, as yet, there isn't a Polish daisywheel in existence anywhere. Sorry!*

If anyone else is interested in finding out about foreign language printwheels, please talk to Walney Audio Visual, 1 Buccleuch Street, Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria LA14 1SR (0229 870000) or Microbridge, Kentlestring Lane, Clifton Murr Industrial Estate, York YO3 8XG on 0904 690617.

Praise indeed

Having 'scanned' your exclusive article on ProSCAN in the September 1990 issue I immediately telephoned Creative Technology to place an order. They said they were waiting for delivery of the scanheads but they would send me one as soon as they were available.

After about one week's wait my ProSCAN arrived. Thank you for such a good appraisal of the equipment. It works very well and I am extremely pleased with all the results I have had so far. I can honestly say that Micro Design 2 and ProSCAN make an excellent team, highly recommended!

I have been subscribing to 8000 Plus since day one. It is the best computer magazine on the market! Keep up the good work! My best regards to all at 8000 Plus.

Captain Roger W Wise
Ruddingham, Nottingham

8000 Plus: I feel sure that the lads at Creative Technology would wish to join us in saying 'Thank you very much!'

Time, space and understanding

For five years I have been carrying out research on coincidence and psychic forewarnings/predictions. I have also used a PC extensively for WP and database applications of this work.

There is some evidence of an active intelligence outside our understanding of space and time, but the idea that this will link to an inanimate CPU in a computer is misleading. As you say, Tarot cards have a symbolism and meaning, both within the designs and in the placement of the cards in the spread. Furthermore, the combination of cards a person is led to choose is far from random, although it may appear to be random to an observer. I have designed my own Egyptian tarot-type cards and find that the meanings of the cards do vary significantly with placement, time and person.

The inspiration for the reading comes from outside our understanding of space and time, and so can hardly be programmed into any computer. PC's are excellent for peripheral aspects of such work, word processing, calculations, databases, etc., but to imply that such machines are capable of interpretation is to mislead. Even experts cannot predict the reading which comes. Every one is individual. Genuine tarot readers do not learn to read the cards from books. Readings based solely on such a knowledge are worthless. Computer programming of tarot card meanings rests entirely on such a base. Consequently, predicted readings are trite, generalised, meaningless and valueless.

Furthermore, they devalue the PC itself. Let us use the PC for the repetitive tasks at which it excels, and our minds for the tasks which God intended.

To try to use a PC for prediction is to try to build a 3-D world with only two dimensions available, or to paint a colour picture using only black and white paint. If you cannot read Tarot cards with your mind, you certainly cannot with your PC!

Dr B J Cocksey, Epsom, Surrey

8000 Plus: Yeah, right an. No, to be fair, I think we did make that point in our August round-up of predictive software to which I think – I hope! – you're referring.

The perfect foil

Your correspondent with the radio interference problem needs to go to the local hi tech corner grocers and buy a roll of aluminium foil, and experiment with frames and shrouds.

The simplest solution is to line the inside of the computer box or if your aesthetics allow cover the outside with aluminium foil. I found a simple screen of foil solved my problem.

David H Walton
Crowland,
Lincs

8000 Plus: Thanks very much for the tip, David.

Memories

Last year you regularly carried advertisements for an Isenstein Ramdrive, but these stopped early this year when you started to carry advertisements for the new SCA Ramdrive.

I have been considering the purchase of a Ramdrive and would have been happy to have tried to fix the Isenstein version but I wonder whether it is still available. Have you any information?

The SCA Ramdrive may be a better buy, but I was concerned that problems might arise if I continued to add more and more units to the expansion port. I already have an interface for my 24 pin printer and one for my AMX Mouse which are normally in place, although they have to be removed if I want to use Masterscan. (I remove that when not in use, as there appears to be no way of turning off the light beam when it is not in use).

Can you advise whether there is any limit to the number of interfaces which can be affixed to the expansion port and whether the SCA Ramdrive is likely to work with the present units.

Finally, I note a reference in the October 8000 Plus, to a new Cirtech Sprinter which appears to have the ability to accept additional RAM. Is this an even better buy than the SCA?

Keith B Potter
Bexleyheath, Kent

8000 Plus: Yes, Isenstein Computer Systems (Glendale Business Centre, Deeside Industrial Estate, Welsh Road, Clwyd CH5 2LR – 0244 822768) still produce the Ramdrive cards you're talking about. They cost £78.95 plus VAT.

The SCA RamPac (£99 plus VAT) is undoubtedly easier to attach and comes in a number of different sizes. Turn to our Best of '90 feature on page 10 for further information. If you do invest in a SCA RamPac, you won't be forced to abandon your mouse and your external printer. It's very usual to have three interfaces working together on the back of the machine, including the RamPac. You attach that one first, then the mouse interface, for example, and then, finally, the ordinary serial/parallel one. There shouldn't be any problem at all.

Load of old cods

I resent your snide response to D A Head on his or her letter about paper quality for the following reasons:

1. As one who is only partly sighted I find that under certain light conditions I cannot read from glossy paper since it flares.

2. Side boxes of text appear to have no thought given to colour choice thus certain combinations are unreadable due to lack of contrast.

3. "Loo paper" as you term it seems good enough for quality newspapers and supports colour photographs.

4. A cheaper grade of paper would support and stretch the monthly budget giving your readers and thus by extension your wage payers more for their money.

Finally I will end with the phrase that all publishers and their staff should bear in mind... "Tomorrow's Fish and Chips!"

Derek Bell
Chaddesden, Derby

8000 Plus: Thanks for your letter.

The organ grinder

I am at a slight disadvantage in that I am not sure what gender I am addressing.

Being male, and I have a birth certificate to prove it, I would naturally assume that such an area as computing and word processing could only be understood to any significant degree by my own sex.

Therefore it came as a pleasant, surprise/shock, following a request from my own 9512 that I write to yourselves on a couple of points, that with regard to your editorial staff I find quite the reverse is in fact the case.

To save you the embarrassment I should like to tell the readers of 8000 that it would appear that your editorial staff ratio is in fact 11 to 6 in favour of the ladies.

Another bastion of male domination has fallen and we were not even aware of it!

What can I now say but keep up the good work girls as I've been taking your magazine for the last 18 months, provided my local WH Smith has not run out, and it certainly hasn't done me any harm.

Henry Jennings
Westoning, Bedfordshire

8000 Plus: What an astonishing admission, Mr Jennings. I didn't realise 8000 Plus should be carrying a government health warning because it's put together each month by a group of women. Well, well, well.

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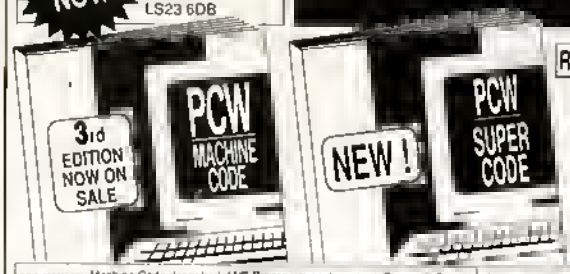

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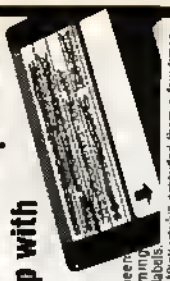

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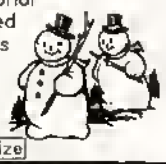

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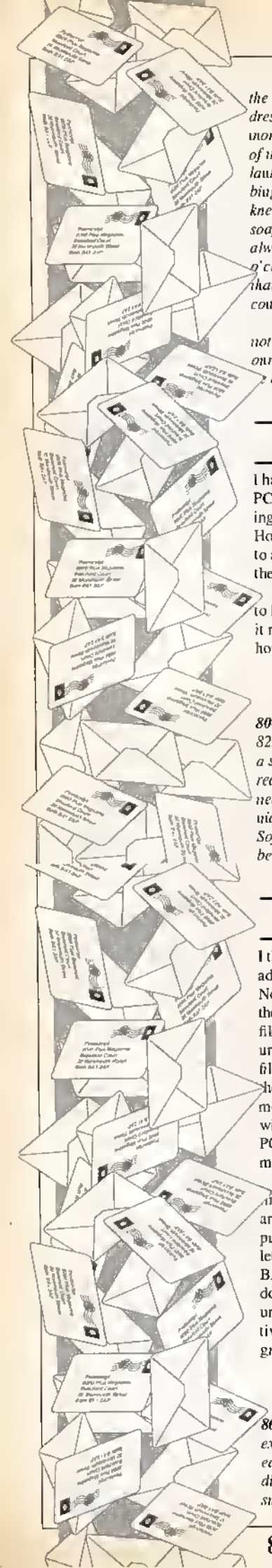

Of course, it is hard work getting the twelve squawling brats up, fed, dressed and ready for school of a morning – in between trips to the banks of the river Avon, that is, to wash the laundry. That's when we're not scrubbing the doorstep on our hands and knees, of course, with a bar of carbolic soap. But each and every one of us is always careful to rush home at six o'clock – as soon as the bell rings – so that we can take care of the creature comforts of our toiling menfolk.

Try not to worry, Mr Jennings; why not take heart in the fact that at least our Sales Executive is a man. I'm sure he can keep an eye on us all.

Talking back

I have recently bought the Amstrad PCW9512 and I am thoroughly enjoying all the facilities on LocoScript II. However I would like to transfer files, to and from, my friends PCW8256 but the 'address missing mark' comes up.

I know it is possible to send away to have this done, but I would like to do it myself. Could you please tell me how.

Ray Rees, Port Talbot, West Glamorgan

8000 Plus: *That's because the PCW 8256 can't read 9512 B drive discs; it's a single drive machine that can only read A drive discs. The utility that you need in order to facilitate this communication between models is Three Inch Software's 9512 Rescue Kit. They can be contacted on 081 546 2754.*

Up, Up and away

I think you were a bit strong in your advice to Miss G Smith (Postscript November) on transferring software to the PCW. While none of her 'taped files/software' will run on the PCW unless, as you suggest, they are ASCII files, and the .COM files that come with the DDI are also no use on the PCW, most public domain .COM files that will run on the CPC will also run on the PCW and some commercial program may do so.

Amstrad, unlike many computer firms, has always been good at offering an upward migration path for its computer users and, though Miss Smith's letter suggests she has not written any BASIC programs for the CPC, had she done so she could convert them to run under the PCW's Mallard BASIC relatively easily as long as they do not use graphics commands.

John R Hudson
Almondbury, Huddersfield

8000 Plus: *Amstrad have never, in our experience, gone out of their way to ease the path – upward or in any other direction – of their customers. They succeed only in being singularly unhelpful at every turn. Thanks for your letter though, John.*

Taking up the slack

Can you advise me how to remove the white stripes which go through the top line of my Micro Design printouts?

The Troubleshooting guide in the manual suggests that it is due to "slack" in the printer mechanics, so is there anyway of taking up this slack!?

I know I can always stick a couple of spare characters at the top of every page, but what a bind.

Dennis R Fisher
Winchcombe, Cheltenham

8000 Plus: *This is quite a common problem that is due, I'm afraid, to the mechanical deficiencies of the native PCW hardware rather than the Micro Design software; daily wear and tear causes the printer to gradually become slack. The simplest way around this problem is to use the codes command in the print queue. The first line would read*
** codes 27 J 1 (or 2 for the linefeeds) followed by*
** [the name of the area file to print]*
Good luck!

Compact solution

I have an 8512, and am thinking of adding a 3.5" external drive. Could you advise which system is the best, and do the kits provide everything needed to fit them (e.g. including cables)?

Stephen Clarke, Leicester

8000 Plus: *We usually recommend Compact Micros' 3.5 inch external drive which we reviewed back in our February issue, on page 17. We also included a step by step photographic guide on how to do it. And yes, you are supplied with all the necessary bits and pieces. Compact Micros can be contacted at 177 Sunny Side Lane, Otley Road, Bradford BD3 QJB on 0274 640589. The 3.5 inch drive costs £79.95 including VAT.*

The game's over

Since I have been trying to obtain the game Head Over Heels for my Amstrad PCW 8256 for over a year, I was thrilled to see it listed in your software guide in issue 49 of the magazine. I phoned Ocean and was very disappointed to hear that they no longer make any discs for PCW's.

If you know of any shops that hold large stocks of software for the PCW 8256 I would be very grateful as our local shops only stock about one game and I have to order anything that I want, and have great difficulty in obtaining any games at all!

PS: The whole family really enjoy reading your magazine and my 10 year old son loves to try out your listings.

E E Ferguson
Rickmansworth, Herts

8000 Plus: *I'm afraid not; as far as Head Over Heels is concerned, it looks pretty terminal. Can anyone else out there help? However, do not despair; there are many excellent games for the PCW - just two of which we have reviewed on page 34 and 35 of this month's issue.*

PD update

From the September issue, you highlight the virtues of Newsweep which you extoll and I can confirm. I would like to point out however that it an be obtained for £1.20 on your own formatted disc from:

Mick Reed
PCW Software Library
11 Older Way
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Telephone: 0903-775039

In fact it comes along with the full library catalogue of their PD Software and a selection of tasters including Lookat which allows you to rapidly scan any ASCII file, unlike the rather laborious task in LocoScript (1).

Next, in an answer to a recent letter, you said that you would never cease to be amazed at the number of hand written letters, which you receive from readers who obviously own a PCW. For my part as a beginner to LocoScript I cannot always make the words stop where I intended them to be! In addition I am a two finger typist, who due to limited space works with the monitor to my left. To sum up, I can write several letters longhand in the time it takes me to write one in Loco. But as you can see I have made the effort.

Conrad L Roe
Walsall

8000 Plus: *Thanks for the information, Conrad.*

It's a gift!

I have just discovered 8000 Plus in my local newsagents, and it is the best early Christmas present I could have hoped for! Many thanks, and I look forward to future issues!

Stephen Carter
Reading

8000 PLUS: *Glad to be of service, Stephen, and we wish you, and all our readers, a very Merry Christmas too!*

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Hurry to find the answers to the five little questions below to win your share of over £700-worth of fabulous Christmas prizes!

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This month sees 8000 Plus falling prey, yet again, to another burst of what can only be described as wanton generosity. You've seen, hopefully, on pages 10, 11 and 12 just how successful a year 1990 has been in terms of hard- and software releases for the PCW. Just when you think it's impossible to expand the machine's horizons further than they are already stretched, someone comes along and does just that. Now is the ideal opportunity for you to be able to cash in on some of this year's innovation.

With the festive season hard upon us, we – with the help of some of our leading advertisers – have put together a veritable mountain of 1990 goodies which you could win for nothing more than the effort it takes you to write the answers to the five little questions below on the back of a postcard and send them in to us. It all amounts to well over £700.

The reader whose card is picked out of the hat first will win – wait for it – Creative Technology's amazing new handscanner.

Second prize is an SCA Systems 512k RamPAC while the third and fourth winners will each receive a copy of Software Imperative's Foreword. Fifth and sixth prizes are copies of MusicPad – kindly donated by Composit Software.

And then Simpell Solutions will be giving away one of their new, improved Margin Makers to each of the remaining 20 runners-up.

And it couldn't be simpler; all you have to do is give the five Christmassy questions below your best shot and send in your answers (on the back of a postcard, please, folks) to Christmas Lucky Dip, 8000 Plus, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW – no later than Wednesday, 26th December.

The January issue of 8000 PLUS will be on sale from 27th December. Don't forget to order your copy now!

1 What is the name of Scrooge's dead business partner in Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol? Was it
- **a) Marlow**
- **b) Harley**
- **c) Marley?**

2 Where does William Shakespeare's Twelfth Night take place? Is it
- **a) Sicily**
- **b) Illyria**
- **c) Rousillon?**

3 On which day of the year did Good King Wenceslas look out? Was it
- **a) Boxing Day**
- **b) Christmas Eve**
- **c) New Year's Day?**

4 How many birds appear – in total – in the song The Twelve Days of Christmas? Is it
- **a) 21**
- **b) 12**
- **c) 17?**

5 Which well-known composer wrote The Nutcracker Suite? Was it
- **a) Dvorak**
- **b) Tchaikovsky**
- **c) Beethoven?**

Com-Stax Winners

Provided they could correctly identify 10 differences between the two line drawings which appeared on the back page of our October issue, the first ten competition entrants to be drawn out of the hat stood to win their very own Com-Stax workstation.

Our congratulations go, therefore, to Mr G S Gubb from North Cornelly, Mid Glamorgan, Mr J Holmes from Cleveland, Ann Watson from Southampton, David Webster from Liverpool, F Mattocks from Essex, John Bell from Havant, Mrs A Macleod from Kilmarnock, Mr B Holland from Newbury, Mr F Dillow from Yeadon and, finally, L Velecky from Southampton. A Com-Stax unit, in the colour of their choice, will soon be winging its way to each of those winners.

Our five runners-up won't be empty-handed for long, either.

Mr Philip Delaney from Tavistock in Devon, John Berry from Edinburgh, SA Sylvester from Lincoln, Mrs S Deary from Stockport and, lastly, Mike Alford from Epsom in Surrey have all won a matching Com-Stax side-desk. Well done, all!

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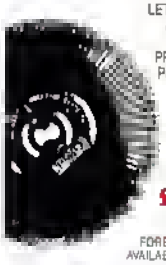

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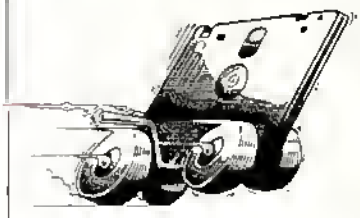
Don't forget that our affiliate publishing company, *PaperBack Software UK*, operates a comprehensive hotline and support service on all it's published products.

Extensive support, close integration of the facilities of UK published applications and the easy transfer of skill and data to other types of computer software like *Cracker and NewWord*,. makes PaperBack Software the logical solution for all UK users.

Cracker 2 *turbo*

still the only high res graphic spreadsheet for PCW users



The range of features and functions in Cracker remains unsurpassed for the serious spreadsheet user.

- Cracker2 £42.61

Touch'n'Go

Typing Tutorial

Can't type? Touch'n'Go will change all this - with a little effort, you can achieve mastery of the QWERTY keyboard in just 24 hours! At the end of the course you should reach speeds of 40 words per minute, with an alphabetic accuracy of 95%.

- Touch'n' Go £21.70

AfterLife NEW PRODUCT

Thinking of upgrading to a PC? Now there's no reason to retire your faithful PCW, because Afterlife converts your Amstrad PCW into an intelligent 9 pin Dot matrix printer. Simply connect up your PC to the PCW via the special cable provided and you will be able to print directly to your 'new' printer

- AfterLife £43.43

From PCW to PC

. . . and back again

The latest edition of Software Technology's versatile CSTAM: the simple to use serial file transfer utility; available with 3" PCW disk, 3.5" and 5.25" PC disks.

Move files between any combination of these systems using the serial connector lead supplied.

- CSTAM £43.43
- PCW Serial interface £59.95 .
- CSTAM and interface together £99

NewWord 2

The classic alternative WP for the PCW

Lost in LocoScript? You may be surprised to learn that the most refined *WordStar* workalike of them all has been available to run on the PCW since long before LocoScript was dreamed of! *NewWord2* operates under the CPM operating system, and uses the universally recognised codes that allow transportability of the skill to virtually any micro computer - including systems operating under CDOS and Unix! What's more, the files are directly transferrable!

- NewWord2 PCW £60
- NewWord2 with Polyprint typeface sets, if purchased together £99.95
- Upgrade NewWord2 PCW to IBM PC edition £39.95
- Upgrade NewWord2 PCW to IBM PC edition with STAM file transfer utility suite £60

(Return of original master disk required with all upgrade purchases)

Prices here are EXCLUDING VAT

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